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Can We Achieve Democratic Participation in Factory and Neighborhood?
Can We Reach Beyond the Limits of the Welfare State?

Essays by Robert A. Dahl, Philip Green, Robert L. Heilbroner, Henry Pachter, Michael Walzer

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Trouble in the Coal Mines
David Bensman

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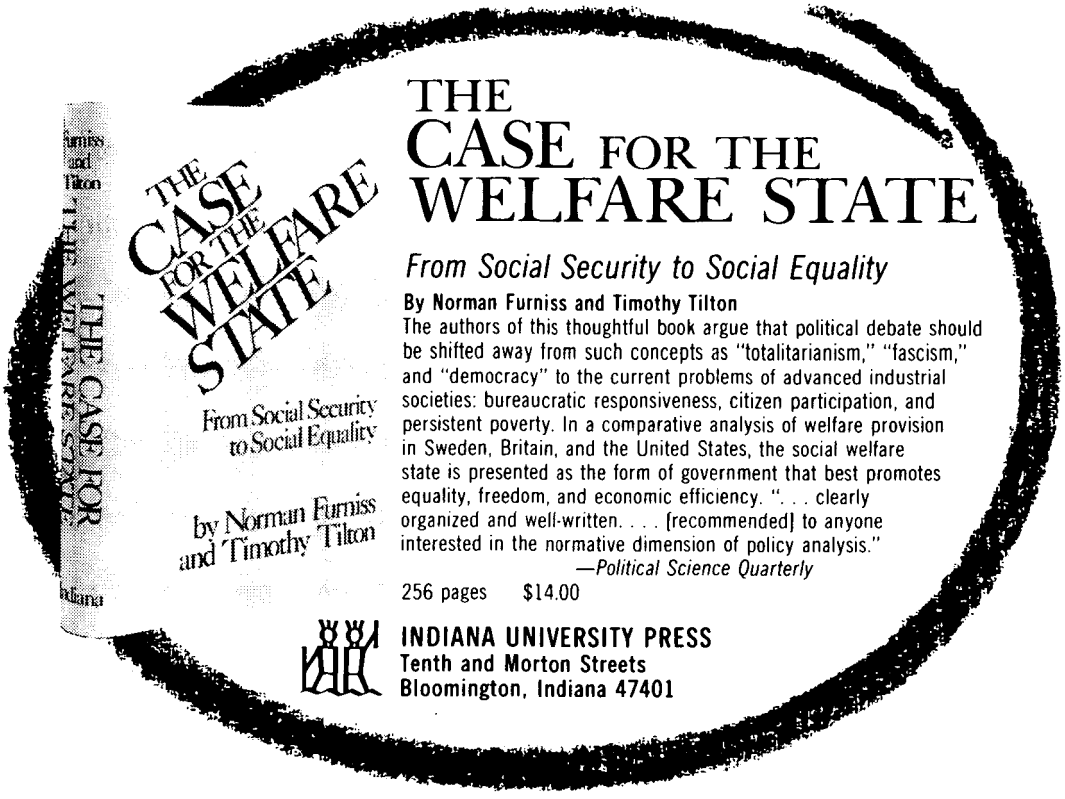
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David Bensman

Troubles in the Coal Fields

The coal strike of 1977-78 resulted in a serious defeat for the United Mine Workers' Union. After a remarkable display of solidarity, the miners returned to work on March 27 dissatisfied and discouraged. The final contract gave them a 37 percent wage increase spread over three years, but the miners dismissed that increase as insignificant; they expect to lose it to inflation and taxes. Weighing far heavier on their minds was the fact that the contract gave them none of the goals they had set at a prebargaining convention in 1976.

Instead of gaining security for the union-administered health system, the UMW lost total control of health-service delivery. The free, comprehensive health care John L. Lewis won for the miners in 1946 is gone; now the coal companies will provide health insurance for their employees through private carriers.

Just about any settlement surrendering the union's medical plan would have been a defeat, but the final agreement had several other features obnoxious to the miners. From the beginning of contract negotiations, the miners had demanded that pensioners who had retired before 1950 be given benefits equal to those received by recently retired miners. The contract provides far less than parity. Finally, the union officials brought to the early bargaining sessions a list of other demands concerning the grievance system, discipline, health, and safety; not only did the union fail to gain satisfaction on these issues, it was not even able to get company representatives to take them seriously.

Why then did the miners ratify the March 24 contract by a sizable (57-43) margin? Part of the reason is that many strikers had run out of savings and credit. But more important was discouragement. They had lost confidence in their union's ability to win substantial improvements.

As a result, the union is in a weak position while trying to meet the challenge posed by nonunion coal companies, which have been expanding their operations in the West and in Eastern Kentucky over the past five years. And if the union's position is weak vis-á-vis the nonunion operators, it follows that the UMW's standing with the unionized coal companies of the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association has fallen. The UMW's future is troubled.

THE COAL FIELDS, for 25 years, have been undergoing profound changes. Old images of the coal industry and the people who work in it are no longer appropriate.

I traveled to Appalachia determined to give the lie to the coal operators' version of the causes of the conflict, namely, that the incessant wildcat strikes, excessive absenteeism, and low productivity were making it impossible for the unionized coal companies to compete with Western non-UMW producers. Surely, the coal companies were

This Issue

We feature in this issue of *Dissent* a special section beginning on page 293 devoted to the subject: "Beyond the Welfare State." This series of articles discusses the prospects and problems of trying to enact through democratic means structural reforms in advanced industrial society.

The group of articles appearing in this issue will be followed by another in the next issue. There will be contributions by Michael Harrington, Ulf Himmelstrand, Dennis Wrong, Bogdan Denitch, Luther Carpenter, Kenneth Arrow and others.

We invite comment from readers. — EDS.

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provoking the wildcats in an attempt to weaken the UMW, and to boost profits at the expense of the miners' safety.

My first interview in the coal fields looked promising. T. C. James, an employee of a company leasing and servicing mining machinery to coal operators, should have been in a position to say what the turmoil was all about. The fact that T.C. had once been a miner, and now occupied a neutral position, made him seem a natural source of information. Moreover, his personal qualities made him seem an unusually valuable informant. A playful and intelligent person, T.C. was a popular figure in the coal fields. When he came to town, it almost always meant there would be some good "picking," for he is one of Appalachia's old-time musicians.

We met in Summersville, West Virginia. T.C. told me that the coal operators were the meanest bastards who ever walked the earth, rigid and contemptuous in their dealings with the men, rapacious in their strip-mining of his beloved mountains, callous in their unconcern with human life. But then T.C. began telling me things that seemed all wrong.

Many of the younger miners simply did not want to work, he said. They're a new breed, different from those who dug coal 30 years before. They're smarter, better educated, more self-confident, less willing to take crap from the "bosses" (as foremen are called), but they just won't let their machines do the work they can do.

Seeing disbelief in my face, he pulled out his workbook and showed me his notes. According to T.C., the continuous mining machines, worked by crews of seven or eight men, were in operation an average of only two hours each eight-hour shift, a figure that meant the companies lost tens of thousands of dollars each working day.

How could that be? What were the machines doing the other six hours? T.C. had an answer: the machines were idle as the men (and an occasional woman) prepared them, adjusted them, loafed, and then cleaned up after them.

"But T.C., what are you telling me? I can't go back to New York and say that. I'll lose every friend I have." I told myself that T.C. had changed, had become so entranced with the productivity of the machines he repaired that he'd lost objectivity.

The next day I left for southwestern West Virginia. A harrowing two-hour, nighttime drive up and down winding, hilly, and pothole-scarred secondary roads brought me to Madison, West Virginia, a small town in the heart of Appalachian mining. Though the mines of Madison produce tens of millions of dollars of coal each year for such multinational concerns as Armco Steel and Occidental Petroleum, the town itself exhibits few signs of wealth. There are trailer camps all along the main roads, for the coal companies own all the land, which means housing plots are prohibitively expensive; although the trailers are improvements over the wood shacks Appalachian miners inhabited until recently, they give the town a look of transiency.

Madison is the site of Subdistrict #2 of the UMW's District 17. During the strike District 17 had been a hotbed of militancy; its members had voted down the second contract proposal by two to one. So when I met a very militant young miner at union headquarters, I was not surprised.

Tim Vance is a 20-year-old, rank-and-file miner, with long blond hair. He's been working at one of the Eastern Associates Coal Company's mines for two and a half years, ever since he finished high school. Although Tim looks like a hippie, he isn't. He's married, his wife does not work, and his well-furnished, bright new trailer is just the sort of home many of his contemporaries would like to own. Both his father and his father-in-law had been miners.

Tim blamed labor problems on the operators. Whenever the market for coal turned soft--and 1977 was an off-year after three years of boom--the company "would just push the men into striking" by insulting someone or ordering him to do something unsafe. The best example Tim gave was a prolonged wildcat at Eastern, which the company provoked last fall when coal piled high on the ground around the tipples because the rivers were frozen and barges couldn't travel. The strike started when Eastern, fed up with high absentee rates, ruled that henceforward no employee would be allowed to leave work sick unless a foreman inspected him and agreed he was in need of medical care. Although the Company ruling was clearly illegal and would have been disallowed by an arbitration panel, the men at Eastern struck, closing down not only Eastern but all mines in the region.

Tim told me he had opposed the strike, believing it "played right into the coal companies' hands." A more disciplined workforce would have filed a grievance and held fast to its jobs, building up the union's treasury in anticipation of the December negotiations. That way, if Eastern had decided it was too expensive to keep the men on the payroll while the rivers were frozen, the company would have had to discharge the men, making them eligible for unemployment benefits. Another coal

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company, Westmoreland, had temporarily laid off its men at that time.

I asked Tim if disputes over safety were the main cause of wildcats. To my surprise he said no, because "any man can refuse to work" if he thinks conditions unsafe. Anytime Tim believes there is danger, for example, he simply stops work; the "boss" knows that Tim can call in the union safety committee, and the committee can call in state mine inspectors. The foreman corrects whatever condition Tim finds objectionable.

Not all the miners on Tim's shift share his concern with safety. In general, "it's the younger men who care more about safety than production." The older men have the best jobs operating the machines and "they just don't like shutting the machines down," nor do they "want to bother with timbering."

Although Tim shared the young miners' safety consciousness, he was not happy with their tendency to walk off the job on slight pretext. "Under the old contract," Tim told me, "there were just too many wildcats. You'd go to work to find the last shift out, and you didn't even know why. Even the union rep wouldn't know." This is the etiquette of the mines, "shift out, shift in"; when one shift goes out, the following shifts do not work until the first decides to go back.

But at Tim's mine, the wildcatting got out of hand. Some of the miners, generally the older men, got tired of losing pay caused by frivolous strikes called by youngsters they considered irresponsible. By mid-1977, the older miners did not always honor the strikes called by the youngsters. Naturally, this caused hard feelings.

Was the major problem with such strikes that they cost the coal companies so much money? Tim disagreed. His objection to wildcats was that they hurt the union. As for the companies, they could afford a few days of lost production. Surprisingly, one coal operator agreed with Tim.

John Chafin, Sr. is president of the family-owned Chafin coal company. Its ultramodern headquarters in Huntington, West Virginia, comes from another world, unlike anything in the coal fields, but somehow the business still has a family touch.

Leafing through his logbook, John Sr. counted up the days his company had lost to wildcats in the past year. He told me he'd lost 14 days' work to wildcats, all by "roving pickets" from other mines, none called by his own employees, for Chafin is the sort of employer who believes good relationships with his men pay off big in production figures. Losing 14 days to roving pickets was bad, Chafin told me, but not financially crippling; he could still make many hundreds of thousands of dollars every year as long as his men worked hard when the mines were open.

The Mystery of the Hoot-Owl Shift

WHY DID wildcats occur? Well, wildcats did not occur equally often on all three shifts, Tim explained. The local president, who works days, which high-seniority men usually prefer, is able to prevent most walk-outs on his shift. But on the "hoot-owl" shift—the late night shift—all the miners are young.

When a company wants to provoke a strike, the "bosses" badger the men on the night shift, knowing that the inexperienced miners will strike rather than file a grievance. Since the grievance machinery is overloaded, a decision might not come down for six to eight months, and the men of the hoot-owl shift don't like to wait for vindication.

On a "couple" of other occasions, Tim told me, the hoot-owl shift struck for no loftier reason than a desire for a three-day weekend. Sunday nights, in particular, were "good times for a wildcat."

The hoot-owl phenomenon seemed bewildering. It was hard to believe that a whole industry could be plunged into chaos because a minority of the men didn't want to work or to wait for the settlement of grievances.

Back at the Madison union hall, I met a district official who explained the mysteries of the hoot-owl shift. Hal Jackson, a man in his mid-30s, is Madison's resident intellectual, and probably the only person I met in the coal fields who ventured his own generalizations about what was happening in the industry.

Jackson agreed with Tim that a disproportionate number of wildcats occurred on the night shift, but that fact was entirely understandable. No one wants to work on the hoot-owl shift, so only young men are assigned to it and this makes them angry. Moreover, the men are new to the mining industry; problems that older miners could resolve on the spot, by bluff or by appealing to the foremen's sense of tradition, the younger men find beyond control and so they simply walk out. Wildcatting is a luxury they can afford.

Jackson showed me a map of the mines in Sub-district #2. The mines that had been worked for decades had few wildcats. But in another area, where the mines had been opened recently, the workforce consisted mostly of young men; wildcats were getting out of hand; innumerable cases clogged the grievance machinery.

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That New Breed

ARE THE YOUNGER MINERS really so different from their older colleagues? I had come to Appalachia believing the "new breed" of miners to be a product of the imagination of Eastern journalists, but everyone I met confirmed the theory.

It is a fact that half the workforce is new to the coalfields. During the years 1950-73, the coal industry contracted and mechanized at the same time; hundreds of thousands of men were fired or retired. Then war broke out in the Middle East. The Arab countries announced an oil boycott. Afterward, OPEC raised petroleum prices high enough to make coal look like an attractive alternative. Appalachia experienced a boom. The coal companies, many now subsidiaries of multinational oil firms, began to open shafts that had been sealed or abandoned. Thousands of miners were added to company payrolls.

The great majority of those hired after 1973 were youngsters, some recent high-school graduates, others Vietnam veterans.

These new workers were something of a mystery to company bosses and union leaders alike. Unlike their fathers, they seemed to lack a "work ethic"; they were glad of the wages they drew, but unwilling to work hard, steadily, and unquestioningly. If they were unmarried, three days pay each week was enough. Consequently, if a boss harassed them, or discriminated against them in work assignments, they were only too happy to take a three-day weekend.

Economic prosperity and spiritual deficiencies were only two of the explanations I heard for the emergence of the new breed. One coal operator I talked to, a man who had grown up in the coal fields and raised a son there, believed that part of the problem was attributable to the Vietnam war. West Virginia sent thousands of young men to fight in Vietnam--Appalachians are intensely patriotic. But when the vets returned home, they found America had turned against them. They did not get a heroes' welcome. And perhaps their war experience itself was disillusioning. Whatever the reason, they're angry, unwilling to take orders anymore, whether from their "bosses" or from union leaders.

Others attributed the young miners' independence to their education. Young miners, unlike their parents, have completed high school; some have been to college. "They can think for themselves," people told me time and again.

Perhaps the experience of the college students of the '60s is now being repeated by Appalachian miners. Bennett Kremen's *Dateline America* reports that similar things are going on in Lordstown's auto plants, the steel mills of Indiana Harbor, and the typing pools of corporate America. The business press confirms Kremen's observations.

Clearly, not all young miners belong to the "new breed." The same coal operator who described the shortcomings of Vietnam veterans estimated that only one-fifth of the new miners were "bad workers." Many of those who complained about labor instability were themselves young men, with wives to support, children to raise, parents to help out. They resented the "carryings on" of their former classmates as much, if not more, than the older miners.

I do not mean to sound hostile to those young miners who walk off their jobs and picket other companies even on flimsy grounds. Moreover, it would be a mistake to focus exclusively on unprovoked wildcats of the hoot-owl shift. Hal Jackson reminded me that labor problems in the coal fields go much deeper.

Though Hal is disgusted with the wildcatting, he does not blame the young men for all the problems. "Labor relations in the coal industry are different from elsewhere, there is just no trust. The miners expect the "bosses" to screw them, and they're always expecting to be put down." Moreover, Appalachians are very sensitive to slights, and if a miner believes he's not being treated with respect, he takes immediate action--to hell with proper procedure.

The "bosses" are Appalachians too. Suspicious that their men are trying to put something over on them, foremen don't try to resolve disputes peacefully, for fear their reasonableness would be interpreted as weakness.

It would be foolish to blame labor instability in the mines solely on a cultural trait; if the coal companies wanted continuous production, they would train their foremen to behave in a conciliatory way. Some companies do. Danny Petit, president of the UMW local at one of Armco Steel's mines in Madison, told me that his local has few work stoppages because labor and management are committed to solving problems on the spot. Chafin Coal is another example.

But at most companies the "bosses" make names for themselves by being tough. Rather than settle problems on the spot, they dare their workmen to file grievances or to walk out. They get what they ask for.

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The Grievance

DURING the recent strike, miners complained that the grievance machinery did not work. Miners told me that it did no good to file a grievance because it would take six months or longer to get an arbitrator's ruling; by then, vindication would often be meaningless. Moreover, most miners believed that the system was rigged in the owners' favor.

Two union officials told quite a different story. First I spoke to "Jim Jones," one of the subdistrict officers of District 17. Jim seemed such an unassuming character when I first saw him, with his baggy blue jeans, faded work shirt, and misshapen red truckers' cap, I had a hard time understanding that he was indeed the subdistrict officer.

Jim told me that a grievance almost never reached the arbitrator when the company was clearly in violation of the contract. Usually, the miners would come to their union officers with complaints about their bosses' conduct. Lacking confidence in their officers, the plaintiffs refused to accept the fact that all they had was a gripe, not a grievance, that however reprehensible the boss's conduct, it was legal according to the 1974 contract. Refusing to accept the boss's harassment and their leaders' judgment, the miners insisted on filing grievances. Then, when the arbitrator disallowed the complaint, the men chalked their defeat down to bias. In the meantime, the system became so choked with cases that decisions took months to come down.

On the other hand, when the men had legitimate grievances they wouldn't bother filing them, figuring the biased arbitrator would disallow good cases as well as bad ones. Many wildcats, Jim claimed, were over issues that the union could have won through arbitration.

I knew the problem Jim described was not unique. For officers in any union, knowing when to drop grievances and when to press them is a fundamental problem of union politics. Skillful politicians learn when to be firm and when conciliatory. But if the miners' grievance was not new, it did appear overwhelming. I asked Jim how the problem could be overcome.

Jim wasn't optimistic. The young miners would have to be taught how to handle their gripes with their bosses, how to distinguish gripes from grievances. They'd have to learn to trust their officers. And their officers would have to gain the skill and courage to resist demands to file unwinnable grievances.

Jim didn't believe all this would happen. He blamed "outside agitators," men without the best interests of the union at heart, for stirring up the men, enlarging the miners' distrust of their leaders to unmanageable proportions.

Hal Jackson agreed with Jim that outsiders were inflaming the situation. According to Hal, the Madison subdistrict is a stronghold of the Right to Strike Committee, which, according to Hal's research, had been organized by revolutionary Communists of a more or less Maoist bent. Unblinded by the hysteria often afflicting union officials plagued by radical factions, Hal judged the Committee effective in feeding the militant spirit of a sizable chunk of the Madison-area rank and file. He estimated that the Committee was responsible for 15 percent of the "no" vote on the second contract. While he expected that figure to diminish when miners voted on the third contract, Hal seemed to think the Right to Strike Committee would remain a thorn in the UMW's side.

Unfortunately, I was not able to speak to leaders of the Right to Strike Committee, for it operates very cautiously, preferring to work behind the scenes. But I did meet two activist miners who sympathized with the Committee. Both middle-aged Jerry Dickens, a local president, and young Tim Vance impressed me as sober, clear-thinking men. Both predicted approval of the third contract, despite their belief it would ensure future chaos and weaken the union; both blamed undisciplined young miners for weakening the union cause. I left Madison with a strong sense that the organizers of the Committee were effective, however obnoxious their politics may be.

The Productivity Problem

JOHN CHAFIN, president of the Chafin Coal company, can afford to be complacent about "the productivity problem." By cultivating good relations with his employees, he has been able to eliminate many of the minor work stoppages that cut into his competitors' production. Moreover, he estimates that his men mine 25 percent more coal per shift than work crews do in the average Logan mineshaft. That's a difference measured in millions of dollars every year.

Is Chafin deluding himself? Are productivity figures really as elastic as John says?

All the miners I met substantiated his analysis. Tim Vance said simply, "the younger miners are less production conscious. They just don't believe producing more coal for the company is to their good." Bobby Burt, another intelligent young miner, agreed with Tim. He estimated that his own

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work crew could double production if the men believed they were working for themselves, instead of for the company.

But don't the miners have an obligation to produce as much coal as they safely can? Wouldn't full production bring down the price of coal, lower the cost of living, and make American steel and other products more competitive?

These questions seem perfectly sensible, for they reflect the prevalent assumptions of our economic system. But before we begin feeling sorry for the coal operators, we should consider the following facts:

(1) In 1974-76, the coal companies' after-tax profits rose to $3.25 for every ton of coal selling for $21.50.

(2) During that time, the coal companies took few significant initiatives to improve the safety and health conditions of mine labor. American miners still suffer many more serious injuries and fatal accidents than their counterparts in European mines.

(3) Appalachian coal output cannot be significantly increased at present because there is a shortage of railroad cars. So even if major improvements in productivity were achieved right now, the effect would only be to boost coal-company profits even higher while thousands of miners were laid off.

(4) Little of the wealth produced in Appalachia stays in the area, to spur regional development.

(5) While the multinational energy companies drain Appalachia of its wealth, the steady erosion of the hills results in pollution of the streams and rivers, and recurrent deadly floods of which the Buffalo Creek disaster was only the most horrifying example.

Production Incentives

BUT THE ENGINES of economic "progress" are relentless. The coal operators are going to attempt to boost labor productivity, and apparently the coal miners will go along with them. The 1978 contract contained a provision making it possible for coal companies to establish "incentive production plans" by which miners whose locals agreed to the plan would be paid extra wages when they exceeded normal production targets. Traditionally, the UMW has opposed such proposals.

Thomas Bethell, former UMW research director, wrote recently in the *New Republic:*

> The UMW has been historically opposed to such plans for the simple reason that they kill people. As the quota is met and exceeded, it is ratcheted upward and the bonus is made more substantial; miners take shortcuts and their own safety representatives are put in the politically impossible position of trying to enforce safety standards that, if enforced, inevitably would reduce production. Sooner or later everyone begins to look the other way because the price is right, and that means murder in the mines.

Bobby Burt, a Logan-area miner, agreed with Bethell's dire predictions. But Bobby, who's gone to college for a couple of years and looks forward to earning a teaching license so he can leave the mines, believes his shift mates will approve the incentive plans. "All they'll think about is the money." Many other miners, regardless of their own position on the incentive plans, told me they believe Bobby's prediction is correct. I saw no signs of determined opposition to this reversal of UMW practice.

Perhaps sentiment will change in the next few months, as the miners get the strike behind them and settle down to the task of reconstructing their union. But the fact that the strikers welcomed the incentive plan indicates that the UMW leadership has not succeeded in teaching its members fundamental union principles.

The Perils of Democracy

IT IS not surprising that the UMW has failed such an important educational task. Though the union has a long and colorful history, in many ways it is also young and immature. The current constitution and leadership are only six years old. If one looks past these six years, to the bad old days of Tony Boyle or the glory years of John L. Lewis, one is talking of a very different union.

Lewis concentrated all power in his presidency and used his hold over the loyalty of half a million men to force the coal operators to establish a unified bargaining committee. Under Lewis's reign, the union was strong on top, but not at the local level. Local officers did not have to learn how to lead their men, for Lewis took care of all important matters. Indeed, those local officers with leadership skills did not last long, for Lewis did not tolerate potential rivals. Hundreds of union leaders lost their offices under Lewis's reign; the UMW was one of America's least democratic labor organizations.

The 1972 victory of the Miners for Democracy brought Arnold Miller to office. A new constitu-

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tion returned self-rule to the locals and districts and for the first time gave the rank and file final say over contract ratification. But the combination of new leaders with a new democratic constitution proved problematic; the new leaders, from President Miller down to local grievance men, had more responsibility than they could handle.

When Jock Yablonsky was murdered, Miller was a retired miner who had gained a local reputation as a leader of protests against the coal companies' and the unions' neglect of black-lung victims; he had never held union office. Miners for Democracy leaders chose Miller to head their 1972 slate because, with Yablonsky gone, there was no one else who could unite anti-Boyle forces. Miller proved he could not manage that task either but, nonetheless, he won reelection last June.

Miller's leadership has been a virtually unmitigated disaster. His decision to put the coal operators' first contract proposal before the union's bargaining council, early in the 1977-78 strike, badly undermined the UMW's bargaining position, and contributed heavily to the union's strike defeat. Now the coal miners view Miller with a mixture of pity, loathing, and disgust. Gene Fraley, local president in the Logan subdistrict, told me he had supported Miller before, but now believed that the union's first order of business would be ridding itself of Miller's leadership.

Among more militant union activists, anti-Miller sentiment was fiercer. On March 23, the night before the miners voted on the final contract, 150 miners met in Logan High School to discuss rumors that Miller had signed a secret agreement with the coal operators to limit drastically the medical benefits in the companies' health insurance plans. After one man from the audience climbed on stage to open the meeting with a prayer, Bob Johnson, a leading contract opponent, took the microphone. His speech urging a "no" vote on the contract was far harsher in its treatment of the UMW leadership than of the coal operators. When Johnson complained, "I don't believe nothing the International Union tells me anymore," the audience—which was divided in its attitude toward the contract—broke out in applause. Later, Johnson expressed despair and bewilderment, "What have I done against this union for it to turn against me?"

A retired miner, who assured me he knew all about the games union leaders play, told me that Miller was withholding money donated to the UMW by other unions because he wanted to "starve the men back to work." Mary Maynard, tough and articulate president of a Dehue local, agreed with this charge. And a spirited young woman miner who was working throughout the strike as a volunteer in the Madison subdistrict's relief program confessed she was having nightmares about why the strike support money had not reached the miners before the contract vote.

If distrust and incompetence were limited to the president's office, the UMW would probably be able to weather the storm. But few miners and union officials seemed to believe the problem was that narrow. And why should it be? President Miller is not the only person in the UMW who took office in the last six years unprepared for new responsibilities. As new mines opened, after the boom began in 1973, unionists elected grievance men but the UMW never had the time, resources, or ingenuity to give them training. Their inexperience meant that the union lost some grievances where the men were in the right; such defeats turned the men against both their leaders and their grievance representatives.

The same sort of problem exists among local presidents. Being a local president in the coal fields is a tough job even for experienced officials. Day or night you may be called to deal with a dispute in the mines, and often there will be no satisfactory way to settle. If you tell a man he has no grievance against his boss, that he's obligated under the contract to return to work, you may make an enemy. If you back up your man, and lose the hopeless case somewhere in the grievance procedure, you will seem ineffectual.

Moreover, local union officials in the UMW don't have the status or prestige of their counterparts in, say, the Steelworkers Union. Perhaps this is because mine locals are small. Perhaps the Appalachians' fierce individualistic egalitarianism accounts for the problem. What can it feel like for a local officer to report to work at 7:30 AM only to find that the hoot-owl shift has gone home for no discernible reason? Or to find that two grocery-store clerks and one miner from another coal company are picketing his mine shaft? Gene Fraley told me he once got so frustrated by a strike called by the men of the hoot-owl shift that he led a group of his shift mates in pursuit of the wildcatters, caught up with them, and spent a couple of hours remonstrating with them until they finally agreed to give up their strike.

Gene was able to exert leadership in this case because he had had some experience as a union man before he became local president; he had worked in a Cleveland auto plant represented by the UAW: "Now *there* was a union." But many UMW local presidents have less experience;

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consequently, they're less likely to take decisive action.

Thus, the democratization of the UMW coincided with the entrance into the coal fields of thousands of young men, and a few women, who had no experience in settling grievances or in running a local union. The new union officers were overwhelmed by their task, and there were not enough older miners to teach the youngsters.

After the Strike

HAVING LOST a lengthy and costly strike, the miners are blaming each other for their defeat. Union officials scapegoat Communists; married men blame unmarried; rank-and-file miners make fun of union officials.

The UMW needs drastic overhaul. Most of the miners I met wanted to depose their officers one way or another. But to mutiny you need a leader. In the current atmosphere of mistrust, it's hard to see where a movement for renewal will come from.

Of course, the UMW has not yet taken the count. Any union capable of mounting an 110-day strike still has tremendous reserves of solidarity to draw on. In the Madison subdistrict, union leaders like Hal Jackson disagree sharply with militants like Tim Vance and Jerry Dickens. Yet, there is still solidarity: Tim and Jerry tell me that representatives like Hal press their grievances just as vigorously as grievances filed by administration supporters. And in Logan's subdistrict office, on Thursday afternoon, less than 24 hours before the crucial vote, an angry knot of miners stood discussing the alleged "deal" signed by President Miller and the coal operators. Dissatisfied with the reassurance they received from their subdistrict officials, the men stormed out, planning their antiratification rally that night. After they'd gone, I found myself alone with "Eddie Workman," one of the sub-District's elected officers. I asked him what he made of the men. Eddie would not criticize the dissidents. "So many bad things have happened," he said, "that you just can't blame the men for being suspicious. I'm suspicious myself half the time. These men are good trade unionists, every one of them. They may be misled, mind you, but I'm not saying one word against them."

Appalachian coal miners are unlike most industrial workers. They live isolated from metropolitan America in communities where coal miners predominate. The coal companies are foreign, their headquarters hundreds of miles away. And there is no middle class to mediate class relations. The class struggle is a tangible reality.

Thus Lu Gardner, proprietor of a Madison motel, told me a story of life in the coalfields that sounded like a tale from the 1930s. The coal companies were not only to blame for the strike; they were responsible for Appalachian poverty, for they took all the wealth from the Mines. More: they were responsible for her father's agonizing, slow death from black lung. They robbed her of her sleep, during those long nights when her son worked in the mines against her fervent wishes.

People like Lu Gardner made the miners' long strike possible. The grocers, barkeepers, neighbors, parents and friends made credit available to the strikers to an extent that workers elsewhere must envy. The miners enjoyed sympathy where strikers elsewhere would meet hostility. Community support for the miners sustains their solidarity, and that seems to be a fact that will not change.

As time goes by, the young miners will marry and settle down, recent entrants to the industry will learn union principles, labor officials will learn leadership skills. Then the union's democracy will prove a source of strength, not a handicap. I hope there is enough time.

A final word. The mine workers' problems are not unique. Many other unions, including such giants as the auto workers and the steelworkers, confront a similar discontinuity in the labor force, the same gap between young workers and older union officials. Antiunion sentiment among employers vexed by slow productivity gains is on the rise. Many multinational firms are moving to "right-to-work" states where workers have less sense of their rights and powers. The UMW's challenge is that of the entire labor movement. □

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Mi Tz'ong

The Trial of a Counterrevolutionary

This article originally appeared in Yellow River, *a magazine published in Hong Kong by former Red Guards. The magazine is recognized as reliably informative, and in a note accompanying this piece the editors state that they vouch that: "What is related here conforms wholly to reality. The reader will not find the slightest embellishment introduced for literary effect."*

We translate from a version—translated from the Chinese into French, with notes by Jacques Seurre—that appeared in the September 1977 issue of the French left Catholic journal Esprit. — EDS.

The Sentence

Twenty-four names, written in close-set characters, appear on an official poster of the regional Public Security office. Eight are the names of persons condemned to death. The others are the names of people sentenced to prison terms ranging from seven years to life. At the bottom of the poster is the old-fashioned symbol of power, the purple seal. The date is November—, 1970. At that time, the *yi da san fan* movement was at its apogee.[1] The poster is written in lapidary style: a few characters suffice to trace the destiny of a man. Here is one example:

Teng K'ing-hsan. Age: 26. Sex: male. Family status: born of a family of bad elements. Individual status: student; lived, prior to his arrest, in the *hsian* [prefecture] of—, People's Commune of —, Production Unit of —. The thinking of the prisoner Teng K'ing-hsan is reactionary on all counts. Extremely dissatisfied with the Party and with socialism, he is animated by a savage hatred for our great leader Chairman Mao, and for this reason he has aroused the indignation of the masses. Between 1967 and 1969, he actually broke out into repeated venomous attack against Chairman Mao. However, given the fact that the prisoner Teng K'ing-hsan has been able to make a sincere confession of his criminal thoughts, the court has shown clemency in sentencing him to only 15 years' imprisonment, with deprivation of his civil rights for a period of three years following his release.

[1]The *yi da san fan* movement was born in February 1970. The name is a contraction of two separate slogans that may be rendered in English as "Attack the sabotage activities of counterrevolutionary elements" and "Fight corruption, waste, and the black market."

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Who Is Teng K'ing-hsan?

AT THE TIME of the Liberation, Teng K'ing-hsan was only four years old. He lost his mother when he was very young. Under the auspices of the five-starred red flag, he had a happy childhood. His father had been a pioneer in agrarian reform; in confrontations between peasants and landowners, he had not been known for speaking softly; he was admired by his entire production team, feared and respected in his village. And so his son could, with full confidence, sing with the other village children: "Red is the fire,/red is the hearth./And I to a peasant family belong." For him, the slogans current at the time—"An end to great fortunes," "Share the land," "Exchanges of dwellings"—signified as many changes for the better in his family's situation. His father wanted him to kowtow before the photograph of Chairman Mao; he was forever saying, "Let us render thanks for all these things to Chairman Mao."

Shortly thereafter, the father sent his elder son to fight in Korea. Then he himself fell ill and died. It goes without saying that the government undertook responsibility for educating the younger son. And from then on, everything went well for Teng K'ing-hsan. He was able to continue his studies, he joined the Communist Youth League, he was president of his student association. It was often borne in upon Teng K'ing-hsan: "You owe absolutely everything to the Party." And in fact, he did think that for him the Party was a kind of guardian angel. The Party was protecting Teng K'ing-hsan; he had only to follow its path to be assured a brilliant future.

However, the year he was to take his university entrance exams, a scandal turned his life upside down. His older brother was demobilized; back in his own country, he fancied he could behave arrogantly toward his superiors. On countless occasions, he disobeyed them. He went so far as to flout the prohibition against going into the hills to cut wood for one's own use. At that point, ostensibly because he was sabotaging the reforestation policy, his superiors slapped the label "bad element" on him.

As of that moment, Teng K'ing-hsan stopped being the son of a poor peasant and became the younger brother of a bad element. Next, he failed to pass the entrance examinations to the university. He returned home, became a substitute teacher, and after six months was dismissed. He accepted all this uncomplainingly. He went back to work in the fields, to live in rhythm with the seasons, as his forebears had done. He was the same as before—hard-working, reserved, except that he had become even more taciturn. He was leading an uneventful life when h was thrown into the Party's jails.

Problem No. 1: Choosing the Target in the Class Struggle

IT SHOULD BE SAID that at the time the *yi da san fan* movement was spreading rapidly throughout the country. And as had been the case with similar earlier movements, *yi da san fan* was becoming the essential business of every production unit, whose leaders were cudgeling their brains: "Fight, yes; attack, yes—but *whom*?" They were as little inclined to confess they were "ignorant in the matter of class struggles" as they were unwilling to entertain the idea of reverting to bygone "revolutionary situations." The secretary of the Party cell in Teng K'ing-hsan's production brigade had, like all the rest, to face up to this difficult problem.

Communications emanating from the central authorities, editorials in the *Nan fang Ribao* (*The Southern Daily*, the Kwangtung regional newspaper), not to mention all instructions handed down through channels, were stressing one point: the *yi da san fan* movement must "strike down the counterrevolutionaries whose sabotage activities are obvious but must also ferret out the class enemy, no matter how well hidden he may be." Apparently, the idea of resuming attacks on those "four types of bad elements" that had long since lost the power to sabotage anything at all had not even occurred to the *yi da san fan* leaders. So it behooved them to discover where the enemy was hiding. The cell secretary himself hadn't the slightest idea. In

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the search for a target, the production brigade summoned all cadres, including basic-level cadres, and all "positive elements" from each village to a big meeting.

In the course of the meeting, a fair number of people were mentioned who were blabbermouths, or slackers, or even individuals who, when it came to taxes, contrived to get off a little too easily. Unhappily, in actions as in words, none of these people looked anything like typical "class enemies"; above all, to a man their social origins were irreproachable. In these circumstances, to attack them as "class enemies" would convince no one.

Was the class enemy far too wily, or were the cadres too dull-witted? However that may be, at the end of several days there was not the shadow of a class enemy in sight. Some people began to envy other production brigades, which had been able to discover *written* counterrevolutionary slogans. Anxiety, the sense of a duty unfulfilled, gripped all the cadres. So painful were their cogitations that they came to the point of saying to each other: "Suppose we went after somebody who, let's say, sort of resembles a class enemy? That way, we could create an atmosphere of class struggle. And once the movement's run its course—well, we could rehabilitate him, and that would be that. In any case, anything would be better than having nobody at all to attack."

It was then that, thanks to an inspired idea of the Party secretary in the production brigade, they finally did hit on someone to attack. The cell secretary offered this analysis: "Teng K'ing-hsan is a person on whom the sun used to shine, and who now has every kind of problem imaginable. There can be no doubt that he is dissatisfied with his fate. It is certain that he must have complained about it, and made reactionary remarks." The cadres felt as if they were awaking from a bad dream. "Well, of course," they cried. "He's the man we need!" And with that, their deliberations were concluded. The cadres than began to conduct minute inquiries among the people for the purpose of making up their dossier.

Meanwhile, Teng K'ing-hsan, entirely taken up by his work and completely unaware of what was being hatched against him, wielded his hoe by day and by night read and reread his citations.

Mobilizing the Masses

THE TARGET for the current class struggle was now established, yet there was still no evidence against Teng K'ing-hsan in hand. The possibility of its surfacing at a "criticism meeting" depended ultimately on mobilizing the masses: it was up to them to supply the production brigade with abundant proofs of Teng K'ing-hsan's guilt. A strenuous and at the same time adroit effort was expended to this end by the production team with which Teng worked. At least twice a day, the bicycle of the cell secretary was to be seen parked near the door of the team's office. Even though they were busily working, "pioneers of the agrarian reform," and "positive elements" were summoned, one by one, to this office. The political commissar of the production brigade had set up his bed in the barn. He and cadres from the popular militia were constantly going in and out. Party members from other villages hurried over en masse; they visited around the village and gossiped with the locals.

From experience, the members of the people's commune had realized that a "political struggle" would be taking place in their village. They were all ears, straining to miss nothing. Word that Teng K'ing-hsan would be the target spread quickly if unofficially through the village. Immediately, everyone was gripped by the same fear—fear of finding himself implicated. The lively hum that pervaded their leisure hours, when people play chess or chat, was silenced. People went home early and holed up in their houses, there to smoke the cigarette of boredom. At the mere sight of Teng K'ing-hsan they moved away as if he were a leper. The easy understanding of earlier days was destroyed; mutual mistrust reigned.

After some days of this silent offensive, the cell secretary deemed that the moment had come to move into action. He had numerous posters put up, with such slogans as "No matter how deep he burrows, we will root out

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the class enemy," and "Since he will not lay down his arms, let us exterminate the enemy," and "Every confession merits clemency, any resistance deserves severity," and "Grave wrongdoers will be brought to account, but coerced accomplices will not be pursued." The village was plastered with posters. Three times a day, the village's "little red soldiers," organized in slogan bands, spread through the streets, bawling their heads off. Morning, noon, and night . . . Cadres from other villages with experience in the matter of class struggle were temporarily transferred to work with the members of the local commune. After hours, they delivered long harangues on the fundamentals of obtaining confessions in the course of the struggle.

Within the people's commune, tension had peaked. Wherever one turned, one heard nothing but "death," "enemy," "struggle," "confessions." What was one to do? Refuse to make a denunciation? At the worst, that meant you might be suspected of being a "buddy" of the enemy, one of his "acolytes"; at best, of not having a well-defined position and of sympathizing with the enemy's disaffection.

Situations like this, in which every individual feels threatened, are necessary if people are to lose every vestige of common sense and end up "criticizing" and "denouncing" other people in order to demonstrate their own purity. It explains how the masses were mobilized, and how a production team of 73 workers produced 81 "freely tendered denunciations."

"This Is How One Must Go About It"

AS RECORDED, the 81 depositions added up to more than 10,000 characters. The portrait of Teng K'ing-hsan was variously drawn but—alas—it remained the portrait of an ordinary peasant, nothing more.

The problem was that Teng K'ing-hsan was no talker, nor was he a slacker in his work; in fact, he was always ready to pitch in and give somebody else a hand. His biggest crime was the he had shopped on the black market. None of this had much to do with being a counterrevolutionary. Several cadres were discouraged when they read the documents; they foresaw a probable change in target. One former pioneer of the agrarian reform, with the outspoken self-confidence of an old working hand who could still do his job, even went to see the cell secretary and defended Teng K'ing-hsan: "The young fellow works well. He comes from a good family. And what's more, he's perfectly correct in dealing with other people. What an idea to make a counterrevolutionary out of him!" Everything—the depositions made and the talk current in the village—combined to show up the weakness of the cell secretary's hypotheses. And yet it was no longer possible for the cell to give up, to leave Teng K'ing-hsan in peace. No cadre wanted to allow the prestige of the Party to be shaken and to leave the entire commune with the feeling that its Party cell secretary was flying in the face of common sense. For the sake of the Party, and to carry out the tasks it had prescribed—also to protect their own prestige—the cadres had henceforth to lead this political struggle to its conclusion.

"This is how one must go about it!" The cell secretary had had a further inspiration. He made the following analysis: "Obviously, Teng K'ing-hsan talks very little. But that proves that he has an inner life that he is obliged to keep secret. To expose his counterrevolutionary spirit, let us begin with his close friends, with people he tells everything to." And thanks to the depositions in their possession, the cadres speedily flushed five young men who were habitually quite close to Teng; they became a fresh, provisional target. The struggle hardened: because more people were now implicated, the prevailing fear was aggravated, and again denunciations flowed in, this time more detailed, more exhaustive. And this time, the cell secretary could consider himself content.

The facts related in this second series of statements were not without their piquancy. One of the five young men had had trouble with girls; another had gone so far as to talk about the story of "T'a Chi cajoling King,

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Tz'u."[2] Was that not a transparent allusion to Chairman Mao and Comrade Chiang Ching, his wife? To make Comrade Chiang Ching a T'a Chi, as wily as a fox and Chairman Mao a tyrant like King Tz'u.[3]

From the basic-level cadres up to the cell secretary, everyone was most pleased: all the efforts of the last days had not been in vain. These young men wanted to be cleansed of their crimes; therefore, they would disclose Teng K'ing-hsan's secrets; on that score, one could rest easy.

The Study Group, or Recourse to the Thought of Mao Tse-tung

WHEREUPON the cadres availed themselves of an infallible procedure. They established a "study group" to consider the thinking of Mao Tse-tung.

The formation of such groups had been advocated by the Chairman himself, but today no one knows for sure just what function he had meant to assign them. On the other hand, everyone does know that they entail something formidable. Roughly, there are two kinds of groups, the "hard" and the "soft." Meetings are held, naturally, after a full and often exhausting day's work. The "soft" groups can go on for as long as two months, at the end of which time the sturdier members have grown gaunt, and the rest become actually sick. The group disbands when everyone cries for mercy. As for the "hard" groups, they operate according to certain basic maxims: "He who is recalcitrant invites severe punishment." "He who refuses to give a full account of himself is resisting the Party; even death would not suffice to expiate such a crime." In these circumstances, a "struggle meeting" is not slow to materialize, at which certain members find themselves covered with infamy.

The five young men who knew Teng K'ing-hsan well did present themselves, little red book in hand, and more dead than alive, at the production brigade quarters where the study group was to meet. So that this study session would end without their being harassed, they were ready to say or do no matter what. With the help of the documents the cadres had submitted, it was easy for the study group to fluster them. Clasping their heads, the five young men wracked their brains in an effort to remember everything that had happened to them from the moment they had reached the age of reason until the instant they had walked into that room. They no longer tried to decide for themselves what was criminal or what was constructive, but to the best of their ability laid all their cards on the table. They left it up to the Party to pass judgment.

When the boy who had talked about the story of T'a Chi cajoling King T'zu learned that it had such dreadful implications, he was horrified. To clear himself, he insisted energetically, "It was Teng K'ing-hsan who told me that. I had absolutely no idea he was attacking Comrade Chiang Ching and Chairman Mao." The fellow who had got himself in trouble with girls listened to the cell secretary tell him that he would have to redeem his past errors by some meritorious deed, failing which he would be dubbed a "bad element"; the boy burst into tears and cried. "I confess! I will redeem myself!" This is what he confessed: in 1967, when Chairman Mao went swimming in the Yangtse, Teng K'ing-hsan had said, "The Chairman sloughs his skin the way snakes do. After a few years, he has to cast his skin. That's why he must go swimming often. He casts his skin in the water." Urged to redeem themselves also by a meritorious action, the three other youths confirmed the

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[2]T'a Chi is the concubine, legendary for her frivolity and cruelty, of the no less legendary King Tz'u, the last emperor of the Shang dynasty.

[3]The spontaneity with which the cadres associate the foxy T'a Chi and Comrade Chiang Ching may seem surprising. It reveals the contempt that China as a whole has long felt for Chiang Ching and that is owed in no small measure to pure and simple misogyny. For the Chinese, as thousands of novels and folktales attest, the vixen is not only as sly as her mate but epitomizes dangerous, lascivious, spellbinding femininity—the slut, as we would say. After her downfall, Chiang Ching was caricatured with notable consistency as a bespectacled vixen. This is not an accident. To bring certain mechanisms that spring from the collective unconscious into play against an individual pays off better than a close Marxist analysis.

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two accusations; what with the cadres' suggestions, followed by the young people's embellishments, the guilt of Teng K'ing-hsan was established at last.

The cell secretary wanted more statements in evidence. So the entire commune had to deliberate on Teng's (retouched) dossier. The number of people claiming to have heard the story of the snake rose from 5 to 20. The place where Teng K'ing-hsan had delivered himself of these remarks—originally, according to his five comrades, in his own house—was extended to embrace the fields where he worked and all publicly frequented spots in the village. Now, properly completed, the dossier held together perfectly. In it, Teng K'ing-hsan appeared as a chatterbox; he was someone who repeated his two stories against Chairman Mao at every opportunity, not even trying to be discreet. This Teng K'ing-hsan and the Teng of the first dossier were two people. Under Party guidance, denunciations that first had been made blindly had gained in political depth, had taken on a clear political tinge. And from that point on, whether Teng K'ing-hsan admitted his errors or not, he was going to find it hard to extricate himself.

He was locked up in the production brigade prison (also known as the cowshed). The "dossier concerning the counterrevolutionary crimes of Teng K'ing-hsan" as well as the "warrant for the arrest of the counterrevolutionary element Teng K'ing-hsan" had been drawn up and was at the disposition of the higher authorities.

According to procedure, Teng K'ing-hsan was supposed to append to the enumeration of his crimes either the notation *ren zui* ("I acknowledge my crimes") or the notation *bu shu shi* ("The above does not correspond to the facts"). However, the two counts of the indictment were overwhelming. One alone sufficed to entail the death penalty. Teng K'ing-hsan was done for. To his certain knowledge, he had never uttered the remarks that his dossier set forth; and yet he would have been hard put to prove that the masses had misrepresented him: the people who would have been able to clear his name were the principal witnesses against him. What should he do? Put down *ren zui*, and have done with it? The consequences of that would be terrible; he did not even dare visualize them. Put down *bu shu shi*? Unthinkable! The court puts its trust in the masses, and the masses put their trust in the Party. How with those three little characters *bu shu shi* could a mere individual invalidate the allegations of the Party, whose authority is absolute, and of the all-powerful masses? That would mean "being recalcitrant," obviously, and they would then apply to him the principle "For the greatest wrongs the greatest remedies." For him this would be even more disastrous than to "recognize his crimes." The cadres urged him to sign, but to no avail; looking distraught, he merely kept repeating in a low voice, "I haven't said that, I haven't said that." "Well then, all you have to do is write 'I haven't said that.' You're free to write down what you want. Nobody's forcing you to say you're guilty," the cadres retorted jovially. They knew well enough that whatever Teng K'ing-hsan wrote at the bottom of the indictment, his case was settled in advance. And this Teng K'ing-hsan had also understood perfectly well, and this is precisely why the courage to sign failed him.

In order to "persuade" him to sign, the production brigade called all the members of the people's commune together in a struggle meeting. There, popular sentiment erupted. More than a dozen people came forward in turn to accuse Teng K'ing-hsan. His five friends spoke with special zeal. What was he to answer? All he did was to beg his friends under his breath to speak with a little more conscience. At the foot of the platform, people grew impatient: insults exploded. A few people rushed up onto the platform to pull his hair and slap him as the others present clapped. The endless waves of the dictatorship of the masses had engulfed Teng K'ing-hsan.

In his situation, no one would have dared come forward in his defense. He could say nothing. All avenues were closed to him except a confession of guilt. He was lost, and he knew it, yet he still refused to sign. It was then that the cell secretary delivered the stab in the back: "He won't sign? Well, there's

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nothing to do but let a middling poor peasant sign in his place! And add the notation: 'Perfidious attitude. Persists in offering opposition.'" That was the worst of all. Brought to bay, Teng K'ing-hsan wrote "*ren zui*—I acknowledge my crimes." And he signed: Prisoner Teng K'ing-hsan.

"The Three Controls"

IN CHINA, the judicial system functions with great circumspection. In order "not to accuse an innocent person unjustly, not to allow a guilty person to be at liberty," it is obligatory, once judgment has been handed down on a man, to proceed to at least three examinations of his dossier. The people in Public Security call this *san shang san hsia*.[4]

The Teng K'ing-hsan dossier passed through these three scrutinies. It was first transmitted, together with the arrest warrant, to the office of the "Triple Union for Public Security"—i.e., union of the masses, the Party, and the Public Security itself—in the people's commune. In this, the first of the three examinations, the Union office deemed the dossier valid; this made it permissible to proceed to an arrest. The dossier was next forwarded to the *hsian* jail, where comrades in the *hsian* Public Security reviewed it. This procedure is quite simple. The Public Security comrades commence by reading a few quotations from Chairman Mao: "We must place confidence in the masses; we must place confidence in the Party." Then they read the depositions aloud, and they ask the witnesses if their testimony conforms to the facts. Once the witnesses, having replied in the affirmative, have affixed their seal at the conclusion of their deposition, one can say that the control is finished.

The third and last of the examinations is made by Public Security comrades attached to the regional Court of Justice. This is the last step before judgment, in the proper sense of the term, is handed down. Which is why these Public Security comrades are not content simply to read the statements aloud. They conduct minute inquiries, seek out all the details. So as not to intimidate the witnesses, they often explain: "We trust the basic organisms of the Party, we trust the masses. This reexamination absolutely does not mean that this trial presents us with any problem but, on the contrary, that we want it to be more effective, to strike down the class enemy even more cruelly. We will always be on the side of the medium poor peasants." Once these explanations have been tendered, the witnesses are reassured, and find that their memories are quickened in an altogether exceptional way. Thus, a host of details that have been left in the dark emerge into the light, thanks to hints proffered by the Public Security comrades, and evidence that has presented problems on the level of logic is little by little clarified.

In the Teng case, when the fresh depositions, reviewed and corrected by the regional Public Security, were read aloud, the cell secretary could not contain his admiration: "They have really done a fine job!" The three controls were completed. Thanks to the proceedings undertaken by the triple union of Party, masses, and organisms of Public Security, a counterrevolutionary element had been reduced to impotence.

"Our Dictatorship Is a Dictatorship of the Masses"

WITH REGARD to how the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be practiced in China, Chairman Mao left only a very anodyne note: "Our dictatorship is a dictatorship of the masses." Therefore, when the Party is preparing trials, it always harks back firmly to the principle: "Let us have confidence in the masses; let us lean on them." After the Cultural Revolution, on the grounds that the

[4] An untranslatable expression that, word for word, means "three ascents, three descents." *Shang*, which means to ascend, also signifies to present a request to a much higher authority. *Hsia*, to descend, means in this context that the given authority "deigns" to respond. The term bespeaks a verticality of relationship and bears a strong feudal stamp, yet conveys a remarkable suggestion of humor.

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masses must participate in the administration of Justice, the judicial organisms enlarged the power of the masses to intervene in dictatorial government. That is to say that the courts place themselves at the orders of the masses also when it comes to sentencing.

A copy of the Teng K'ing-hsan dossier was sent to each production team. The first part of the document comprised the charges pending against him. At the bottom of the document, a two-paragraph space was left blank so that the masses as well as the basic Party cell could record their comments. The final signature read: "The Commission of Judicial Inquiry of Public Security for the region of —." At the top of the page appeared the red seal of the Revolutionary Committee of Public Security.

Custom requires that in handing down a sentence the court refer to these final comments vouchsafed by the masses and the Party cell concerned. This is why—and the comrades from Public Security who come to collect the appraisals of the masses energetically stress the point—one could not fill in the spaces purposely left blank with things like "I firmly support the punishment the authorities will decide on" or other such banalities.

There is one point on which the masses are very vulnerable. They know quite well that in this world there is something that is called the law. But the articles that comprise the law—who has ever seen them! So it is not surprising that when people were asked to give their opinion about the sentence to be imposed on Teng K'ing-hsan, they could say things like "But according to what must one determine the sentence?" "How much is one counterrevolutionary statement worth?" "When a thing like that is said twice, does it count twice?"

In point of fact, the Public Security comrades, who had made no mention of laws, had said to the masses: "Our dictatorship is the dictatorship of the masses. We respect their judgment," without knowing themselves how to pass sentence on Teng K'ing-hsan. Everyone held his peace, waiting for the next person to speak up first. And now—it will no doubt seem hard to believe—the individual who was Teng K-ing-hsan, the work that he had contributed to the commune, the number of mouths to be fed for which he could be responsible—all that was now relegated to second place. One single thought obsessed everyone: "How do I behave to be correct? What do I do to get out of this so that the tragedy that has befallen Teng K'ing-hsan never happens to me?"

A psychological tension had built up in everyone. When the moment arrived for the last meeting, the situation shaped up like this: on the one hand, the tribunal, which had confidence in the masses, would take into account their statements and abide by their verdict. On the other hand, only those members of the people's commune who followed the Party could be considered as being part of the whole, "the masses." And if Teng K'ing-hsan had fallen so low, was that not because the Party had cast him out? Was not his fate precisely the fate of those who do not follow the Party line?

Some people had well understood that if, at such a moment, they expressed their absolute fidelity to the Party, their visceral hatred of the class enemy, it could stand them in very good stead. At the meeting, they yelled: "To insult Chairman Mao is a crime that deserves ten thousand deaths!" "Teng K'ing-hsan to the stake!" And after all, what could better underscore a person's class position than such a bellow? The whole room thereupon echoed: "Yes! Let him be shot! Shot dead. DEAD!" And when the storm of voices had subsided, the words "We firmly demand that the counterrevolutionary element Teng K'ing-hsan be shot" filled the space on the document that was reserved for the judgment of the masses.

When he read the verdict of the masses, the cell secretary who had laboriously staged the entire affair suffered a twinge of conscience. As the judgment of the basic Party cell, he wrote: "Was able to cooperate. Deserves clemency." Confronted by these two judgments—"that he be shot" and "deserves clemency"—the court opted for the middle way: there resulted a sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment.

The Teng K'ing-hsan affair was closed.

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It had some repercussions—positive, in an intensification of labor; negative in people's daily lives.

The entire region experienced veritable upheavals. On mountainsides that heretofore had been cleared reluctantly, terraced rice fields were constructed. Irrigation ditches were dug. Roads were built that once upon a time allegedly would have taken up too much ground, or would not have been profitable, etc. To whom did the credit for all this redound? No one knew exactly. All everyone in the people's commune knew was that living conditions were much harder than before, that now you had to put up with the worst without a murmur. But the cadres, who did know, told each other: "It's all owed to the struggle against Teng K'ing-hsan."

And so the cell secretary was right to note in an activity report:

> Our production brigade launched valiantly into a class struggle and bagged the counterrevolutionary element Teng K'ing-hsan. All this contributed greatly toward raising the level of class-consciousness in everyone, stimulating zeal for work, and producing such great changes here that one can say the whole region has been shaken up from top to bottom. All of which highlights once again a celebrated phrase of Chairman Mao: "When put into practice, the class struggle is a thing of overwhelming efficacy."

And so the struggles and the condemnations have the effect of stimulating production, and it is for the good of China and for the sake of her future that Teng K'ing-hsan rots in his cell.

—*Translated from the French by* ADRIENNE FOULKE □

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- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. —THE EDITORS

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Harry C. Boyte

Beyond Liberalism: Toward a Living Democracy

On the surface, the big business program for the 1970s is much easier to understand than its acceptance by much of mainstream liberalism and the public at large. From the early '70s onward, such corporate-connected strategists as John Connolly, William Simon, David Rockefeller, and even Charles Schultze have argued, in effect, a simple position: wealth should be redistributed upward. The specifics of the corporate agenda have similarly been voiced again and again: cutbacks in "big government" (i.e., social-service spending); easing of environmental and consumer controls on corporate behavior; new tax incentives and forms of subsidy for business; and toleration for relatively high levels of unemployment. The large corporations have sought—in the astonishingly candid language of a *Business Week* editorial of October 12, 1974—to "sell" the public, through a wide-ranging advertising blitz, on the "idea of doing with less so that big business can have more."

Yet, the capitulation of mainstream politics to the corporate assault cannot simply be explained away through conspiracy theories or reference to an all-powerful ruling class—the business community in the '30s was nearly as unanimous as that of today in its savage opposition to major reform. While such politicians as Hugh Carey, Jerry Brown, and Jimmy Carter have acquiesced in much of the corporate agenda, they have nonetheless also retained considerable popularity in their political retreat. Such capitulation raises grave questions for reformers of a broad range of opinion. Why has the liberal tradition proven so vulnerable before the corporate crusade? As for socialists, why, in a period marked by greatly increasing questioning about corporate behavior, do we still see socialist organizations without the first signs of a genuinely popular base among the people?

This article will examine the Achilles heel of the reform tradition in its liberal American and European guise. It suggests that a technocratic-edged contempt for popular initiative and participation in decision-making has long been a dominant element in the Western notion of progress, and that it is such a feature that now redounds to the tradition's deep harm. Finally, it suggests that effective strategy for social change in America must focus on efforts to democratize and open up both public and private American institutions.

A cluster of antidemocratic assumptions have run through American liberalism at least since the failure of populism and the emergence of "progressivism" in the early years of the 20th century.

Lawrence Goodwyn's sweeping new reinterpretation of American populism, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in American History*, argues that the failure of the populist insurgency in 1896 ended the only authentically mainstream challenge to corporate control over the nation's politics. "Progressive society" was elite-dominated. "Populists dissented against the progressive society that was emerging in the 1890s because they thought that the mature corporate state would, unless restructured, erode the democratic promise of America." A democratic tradition of liberalism has continued to exist as the partially submerged counterpoint to the more characteristic strain. Such a politics, identifying with and seeking to build popular organization and insurgent movement, led Paul Douglas, for example, to argue that without "the organization

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of those who are at present weak and who need to acquire that which the world respects, namely power . . . we are likely to find the permanent benefits of Rooseveltian liberalism to be as illusory as were those of the Wilsonian era." Indeed, federal agencies, from Hopkins's Works Project Administration and Tugwell's Resettlement Administration through Sam Brown's ACTION of today have at times reflected such a brand of liberalism. The point, however, is that the reigns of true power in the reform heritage have been held by the Arnolds, Schultzes, and Brzezinskis, who have in turn crafted the basic features of welfare-state institutions.[1]

The antipopular stance stemmed partly from reformers' acceptance of the corporate-dominated framework of policy, reinforced in turn by business-sponsored liberal policy institutions, reform groups, and political parties. "The folklore of the business elite came by gradual transition to be the symbols of governmental reformers," concluded J. B. Shannon's careful study of municipal reform during the progressive period; that study described a pattern evident in other arenas as well, from labor relations to resource management. "Efficiency, system, orderliness, budget economy, saving, all were injected into the efforts of reformers who sought to remodel municipal government in terms of the great impersonality of corporate enterprise."[2]

Yet, the autocratic world view that progressives shared with the elite—fearful of discontent and disturbance "below," favoring only the most carefully controlled change, appeared in the ideology of those who did feel no love for the corporate giants. For example, Herbert Croley, an early editor of the *New Republic*, remarked that the liberal movement was "designed to serve as a counterpoise to the threat of working-class revolution." Indeed, the authoritarian presuppositions of progressivism came to full expression in the outlook of that new, technocratic middle class whose rise has been so brilliantly chronicled by anticapitalist apologists for its role, from Veblen to Galbraith. Galbraith articulated the elite view clearly in 1967, as he contrasted capitalist irrationality with the need for long-range public rationality and planning: "It is the essence of planning that public behavior be made predictable—that it be subject to control."[3]

THE AUTHORITARIAN TRAITS of liberalism have been a consistent theme through most of the century, above all the preference for "value-free" technique applied to political and social questions and for leaving decision-making to experts and administrators. Such technocratic perspectives came into their own in the construction of the economic apparatus of the New Deal. Leading figures in the Roosevelt administration could sometimes express their views with breathtaking candor. "The writer has faith, . . ." avowed Thurman Arnold, Roosevelt's chief of the antitrust division, "the fanatical alignments between opposing political principles may disappear, and a competent, practical, opportunistic governing class may rise to power."[4]

The technocratic outlook spanned a wide range of liberal and reform opinion. In the '50s, as committed a man as Gunnar Myrdal could argue that "increasing political harmony . . . [is emerging] between all the citizens in the advanced welfare state. The internal political debate in those countries is becoming increasingly technical in character. . . ."And similar views were expressed last fall by Carter's new CEA chief, Charles Schultze, who voiced the hope that "issues and alternatives [can come to be] debated along lines that are less ideological, more pragmatic."[5]

Such authoritarianism did not merely inform the ideology of major craftsmen of the welfare state; it also shaped the institutional structure of welfare-state reform in a variety of contexts. This authoritarianism led to liberal support for increasing executive power, acquiescence in the profoundly anticivil-libertarian activities of police agencies, celebration of that "value-free" kind of social science so perceptively exposed by C. Wright Mills. It came to infuse the liberal approach to labor relations, education, welfare programs, and health care. By the end of the 1950s, it eventuated in a startling sense of completion among liberal intellectuals who should have known better. "The fundamental problems of the industrial revolution have been solved," proclaimed Seymour Martin Lipset as the Eisenhower era came to a close. Even those who felt greater unease with the world around them often saw little prospect for its betterment. "For the first time in history the engine of social progress has run out of the fuel of discontent," remarked Adlai Stevenson at the decade's end.[6]

The authoritarian streak in liberalism can be noted in both American politics and in the politics of European social democracies. Indeed, the similarities between the internal structures of institutions in different political climates of the industrialized world have been remarkable. "From

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the standpoint of the employee," remarked Arnold Toynbee a generation ago, "it is coming to make less and less practical difference to him what his country's official ideology is and whether he happens to be employed by a government or commerical corporation."[7] State-owned businesses under social democratic governments in Western European nations produced those same patterns of hierarchy, efficiency-minded management, and labor fragmentation that could be found in the most capitalist of American firms. And with the rebellions in Eastern Europe, the Stalin revelations, and the publication of such scathing works as Milovan Djilas's *The New Class*, only the most die-hard of the faithful could any longer suppose the Soviet bloc nations to be models of "workers' democracy."

Thus, the complacency of mainstream reform set the stage for the explosive confrontations of the 1960s. It could be argued that the American movements of the 1960s, charting new ground in protest regarding the discontents of modern industrial society, led other nations precisely because of the conceptual orthodoxies within which traditional Marxist politics still labored. More democratic, restless elements of the liberal tradition in America certainly furnished vital allies and aid for the black movement, the student movement, the antiwar and women's struggles. The large contingent from the United Auto Workers in the 1963 civil-rights March on Washington was a visible sign of such aid, whose underside came in the form of financial help to such projects as SDS's community organizing efforts, which later student rebels would be loath to acknowledge. Yet, on the whole, the movements of the '60s represented newly politicized and activated social forces in motion among blacks, the poor, young people, and women.

Moreover, the revolts of that decade, including for a time that of the New Left, posed the issue of democracy in industrial society, and in so doing helped revivify the left heritage around the world. Indeed, the radical democratic impulse came from among those middle-class young people who seemed the apparent heirs of technocracy yet felt themselves to be its victims. And in the course of the growing youth movement, alongside the continuing civil-rights insurgency, the growing protest against the war, the emerging women's movement, the polarizations within liberalism became increasingly acute and explicit. On the one hand, the minority-democratic strand of the tradition sided forthrightly with the protesters. "Everywhere man turns," wrote Tom Wicker, "from the classroom to the supermarket to Mission Control, he is being dwarfed by his own handiwork—hapless and driven in his zip-code world. . . ." Yet, those "pragmatists of reform" who long had the upper hand in defining the shape of liberalism remained unimpressed, and indeed reasserted the technocratic faith only the more strongly. Thus, according to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the society was in transition toward a "technetronic" future, which would see "technology, especially electronic communications and computers, promoting basic social change." In his view, "some of the recent upheavals have been led by people who increasingly will have no role to play in the new technetronic society," and in fact their protests could be seen as "merely the death rattle of the historical irrelevants."[8]

In the end, the revolt of the New Left proved to be laced with a naivety, arrogance, and unreason, which doomed its efforts. Those who had long been most perceptive in fathoming the limits of liberalism were often quick to point out the inadequacies of its youthful antithesis. "Suddenly I realized that they [the young] did not really believe that there was a nature of things," explained Paul Goodman. "Somehow all functions could be reduced to interpersonal relations and power. . . .They had so well learned that physical and sociological research is subsidized and conducted for the benefit of the ruling class that they did not believe there was such a thing as the simple truth."[9]

TO MOST AMERICANS, trapped in a world of dead-end jobs, family responsibilities, and budget-balancing, it often seemed that the frequently antiworking-class sentiments of middle-class radicals simply represented more of the same treatment they had come to expect from unresponsive elitists of all kinds. Yet, a substratum of popular resentment against welfare-state authoritarianism had been building up for decades, and waited to be tapped. A poll of the American people in 1967 found almost half of those interviewed believing that big government represented the gravest threat to the country's future. The right proved to be the force that first spoke to the subterranean discontent against mainstream liberalism. By fusing popular frustration and anxieties about the protests of those "below" in the social order—blacks, the poor—with longstanding hostility toward the "pointy-headed bureaucrats" who "look down their noses

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at the average man," modern demagogues found a mass audience among white working-class people. "Decisions have been taken out of the hands of the people," declared George Wallace's campaign platform in 1968.[10] And, in 1972, Richard Nixon gave far more subtle and effective voice to such themes in his cynical rantings against "government control" and "impersonal bureaucracies."

Thus, mainstream liberalism prepared the way for its demise. Popular resentment against bureaucrats, "experts," "social engineers" and other "technocrats" always contained a complex of emotions: prejudice, fear of change, and loyalty to traditional conservative social values. Yet, its core impulse was authentic, a legitimate anger toward a reform tradition that had long shown contempt for ordinary people's intelligence, imagination, and creative ability to make key decisions about their own lives.

Now it is necessary to understand the origins of the popular resentment toward liberalism. For the appeal to people's hostility toward big and impersonal government remains the fundamental weapon used by the corporate assault on reform. Indeed, the widespread experience with unresponsive, incompetent, and undemocratic public institutions often furnishes understandable ground for the capitulation of genuinely decent liberals to the idea that "small government is beautiful" and that private institutions can often do the job better. Over the last year, *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, for example, has reported on a number of arguments made by men like Charles Schultze and given elaborate form in an article by James Wilson and Patricia Rachel in the winter issue of the *Public Interest* that government agencies are more inefficient, incompetent, tyrannical, and unresponsive to the public. There often is truth in such arguments—though private corporations are unresponsive in ways government agencies are not. Yet, what is most disturbing about the conclusions drawn from these arguments is the terrible, reactionary pessimism that underlines the liberal retreat from any hope of authentic democracy.

> The *Public Interest* article [writes Lewis] is a start at what ought to be a fresh way of looking at the old argument about public and private enterprise. Its paradoxical-sounding argument should provoke political thinkers in both the United States and those Western countries with more socialist economies [by suggesting] nationalization may be inconsistent with effective regulation.[11]

In the present political climate, then, traditional mainstream reform provides no solutions. Indeed, its failure has led Carter to make the effort to "reorganize" the federal bureaucracy a central theme of his administration. But reorganization in itself can easily lead to more centralization of authority, with the criterion of "efficiency" even more dominant as the only operative principle—and cosmetic talk shows with the people or casual fireside chats in sweaters are not likely to long provide substitutes for effective popular democracy. In contrast to the authoritarian, technocratic side of liberalism, a new and effective politics of change must make the issue of genuine democracy the center of its language and program.

The humanist strands of liberalism show growing support for grass-roots and radical democratic initiatives and organizing efforts, and programs. Such leaders as Barbara Mikulski, Ralph Nader, and John Conyers talk of a new people's movement to resist the corporate agenda. During the 1976 presidential campaign the Democratic Forum commissioned Gar Alperowitz and Jerry Faux to present their proposals for decentralized, cooperative institutions to the Democratic party. An explosion of neighborhood organization in the last several years is paralleled by the slow rebirth of labor's social activist heritage and such new, large-scale anticorporate coalitions as the Americans for a Working Economy.

Divisions within liberalism ever since the turn of the century foreshadowed the current polarizations within American reform movements. As early as 1905, according to Robert Wiebe, a political schism was evident in middle-class progressivism between efficiency-oriented reformers, tied to corporate occupations, and service-oriented liberals, who staffed the growing social work and government institutions.[12] But such divisions were superseded by the overriding drive for economic expansion, which has in fact held sway in widely varying political systems around the world throughout the century. In the wake of the growth imperative, technical values and efficiency-oriented criteria for change have triumphed over more democratic and cooperative objectives.

In our advanced industrial society, however, the growth imperative has been undermined both by external circumstances and by the inner decay of its justifications. The difficulties in the path of revived, '60s-style expansion grow more and more evident. Simultaneously, opposition to the waste, the social and community destruction, and human alienation attendant upon "normal patterns" of economic growth has mounted rapidly. Finally, experiments with "human-scale," intermediate

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technologies and workers' control suggest that older, centralized, and hierarchical forms of economic enterprise are no longer either most effective or most rational as means of achieving abundance. In such a setting, the capitalist attack on reform has dramatically widened the divisions within the liberal tradition.

This widening schism in American reform, moreover, offers new space for an indigenous socialist movement, if American socialists can overcome older divisions and build new forms of alliance around a vision of authentic democracy. It is precisely the antistatist, antibureaucratic sentiment in the political culture that has made socialist gains difficult, and even progressives like Ralph Nader who now call for publicly owned economic institutions disavow the language of socialism on the grounds that "there never was sufficient recognition of the fact that if the government becomes a bureaucracy with its own momentum . . . then the society is basically trading one master for another."[13]

A strategic move to lessen popular hostility toward government enterprise is suggested by the approach of the European left. It is exactly the bureaucratic, authoritarian element of welfare-state politics that some European Socialist and Communist movements now have united to extirpate—concurring on the strategy of the democratic stage of transformation—to democratize both public and private institutions. In our society, the concept of a "democratic stage"—in which it is the primary task of socialists and authentic reformers to build a mature movement for expanded democracy in all arenas—seems if anything more apt and necessary than in Europe. □

Notes

[1]Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. xiv. Paul Douglas, quoted in Howard Zinn, "Middle Class America Refurbished," in Allen Davis and Harold Woodman, eds., *Conflict and Consensus in American History* (Lexington, Mass: D. C. Heath, 1972), p. 310.

[2]The municipal reform study was by J. B. Shannon, quoted in Samuel Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," in Stanley Kutz and Stanley Kutler, eds., *New Perspectives on the American Past* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 146.

[3]Herbert Croley, quoted in James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. xi. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (New York: Signet, 1967), p. 326.

[4]Thurman Arnold, quoted in Zinn, "Middle Class," p. 306.

[5]Gunnar Myrdal, quoted in Jeffrey Galper, *The Politics of Social Services* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975), p. 113. Charles Schultze, with Henry Owen, in the "Introduction," Owen and Schultze, eds., *The Next Years* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1976), p. 14.

[6]Seymour Martin Lipset and Adlai Stevenson are quoted in William Leuchtenbury, *A Troubled Feast* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 4, 11.

[7]Arnold Toynbee, quoted in Galbraith, *State,* p. 109.
[8]Tom Wicker, quoted in Leuchtenburg, *Feast*, p. 186. Zbigniew Brzezinski, quoted in Joe Stork, "Enter Brzezinski," *In These Times,* January 12, 1977.

[9]Paul Goodman, quoted in Leuchtenbury, *Feast*, p. 199. The Gallup Poll, cited in *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 30, 1977, showed that 39 percent of the public continued to believe that big government represented the gravest threat to the nation's future, but the number believing big business held such a role has soared, from 14 percent in 1967 to 23 percent in '77.

[11]Anthony Lewis, "A Most Ingenious Paradox," *New York Times*, February 20, 1977.

[10]George Wallace, quoted in Leuchtenburg, *Feast*, p. 211

[12]See Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 176.

[13]Ralph Nader, quoted in Joe Klein, "Ralph Nader," *Rolling Stone,* November 20, 1975. □

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Joseph Clark

Dreams and Nightmares

THE ROMANCE OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM, by Vivian Gornick. New York: Basic Books. 333 pp. $10.

A FINE OLD CONFLICT, by Jessica Mitford. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 265 pp. $10.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN COMMUNIST: A PERSONAL VIEW OF A POLITICAL LIFE, by Peggy Dennis. Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Co. 302 pp. Paper, $5.95.

THE GREAT GAME, by Leopold Trepper. New York: McGraw-Hill. 442 pp. $10.95.

Now I know why I flunked the test given by Vivian Gornick at lunch in a Chinese restaurant. It turned out that she was screening me for an interview to be used in a book she was writing on the romance of American Communism. But between the egg roll and the fortune cookie she apparently concluded that I was not among those who "walked the wire successfullly and remained whole and strong." Clearly, both her thesis and ideology were so neatly packaged in advance that she did not want to add my experience to that of an old, departed friend and comrade whom she had already interviewed.

My friend had been terribly disruptive of her *idée fixe* of Communism as creator of that "inner passion" and "intensity of illumination that tore at the soul," to cite a bit of her description. Gornick wanted no more tampering with her dream of Communism, which spoke "with such power and moral imagination." If only she had shared with her readers what she meant by "moral imagination," there might have been far more than the singularly cluttered, but uninformative contents of her account.

Whatever the Communist experience was, it is touching to see how some—in what we once lovingly called the capitalist press—have taken the Gornick description to heart. The *New York Times* published a section of the Gornick "passion" in its Book Review, followed by a laudatory review by a democratic socialist, whose emphasis on the crucial requirement, that socialism must above all be democratic, played a part in the departure of this reviewer from the Communist movement. A number of "capitalist" journals now print reviews of books on the Communist experience, which twit former Communists for daring to entertain bitter recollections and give them good marks only if they remember that experience without regret or recrimination. This was the message of the review in *Newsday*, a paper of considerable circulation and solid capitalist paternity. Its reviewer, Jessica Mitford, was the author of that witty satire on the American funeral business, *The American Way of Death*. Now she had written a book on her experiences in the American Communist party, a more amusing and a better crafted book than Gornick's, but equally lacking in candid recollection and equally barren of political appraisal.

Still another book, by Peggy Dennis, widow of

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Eugene Dennis, the former general secretary of the American CP, turns out to be far more significant than Gornick's or Mitford's, but in a way that the author, alas, never intended it to be. Peggy Dennis never meant to depict the rejection of mind and reason, the acceptance of a discipline that prompted acquiescence in anything demanded from above, even to the point of leaving an only child with the Russians permanently, on orders from Communist International leaders Georgi Dimitrov and Dimitri Manuilsky. But that is what she has done, and it emerges in painful detail.

Leopold Trepper, a Polish Jewish Communist who worked for Soviet intelligence and indeed organized the Soviet espionage network in Western Europe when it was occupied by Hitler, performing incredible feats in behalf of the Red Army battling against the Nazis, has also written about the Communist experience. Some of it dovetails neatly with the Dennis book. He lived in the same Comintern Hotel Luxe in Moscow where Peggy and Gene Dennis lived. On his return to Moscow after his war service he "sat" ten interminable years in Soviet jails. After Stalin died he was exonerated of any kind of "guilt" and allowed to return to his family in Moscow. He tells how he is reunited with his sons, but they cannot recognize him. He says to his oldest son, "I am your father. Ten years ago I returned to Russia, and for ten years I have been in prison. I have just been released and brought here to you—Do you have any questions to ask me?" His son replies: "Only one, Why were you sentenced? In this country, innocent people don't spend ten years in prison."

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II

THE SUBJECT MATTER of all these books has acquired an insistent timeliness, whatever the shortcomings of the books themselves. Commentators and statesmen debate Eurocommunism. The discussion goes on and on about Communists in America after World War II, when they became the excuse for the blight of McCarthyism. Some value may be wrung from the Gornick and Mitford books because there are Americans who will discover that Communists were real live people, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases. From all four books there comes a realization that the 1956 revelations by Nikita Khrushchev about the horrors of Stalinism inaugurated a deep and endless crisis of Communism.

Of the four authors, only Trepper confronts the issue. He writes: "We wanted to change man, and we have failed. This century has brought forth two monsters, fascism and Stalinism, and our ideal has been engulfed in this apocalypse."

If an insoluble crisis developed among Communists in the middle 1950s, we still must face up to a great paradox: there is every reason to believe that Communist power, in the Soviet Union, China, and Communist satellite nations will be with us for a long time. And Communist movements will flourish in certain West European countries.

Much of the current discussion of Eurocommunism leaves more questions than it answers, because it pays too little attention to the central factor that emerged in 1956: a *Communist* rebellion against Communist tyranny. That is the origin and essence of Eurocommunism. True, there were precursors of Eurocommunism that go back to the founding days of Italian Communism. But to understand the quality and direction of Italian Communism under Berlinguer is to know, above all, the crisis that swept over Communist movements in 1956. The early signs of that crisis first appeared when the tyrant died in 1953. But it flared up everywhere in the Communist world after Khrushchev's speech in February 1956.

If the Spanish Communists under Santiago

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Carrillo have moved further than any other CP toward revising the tenets of *both* Leninist and Stalinist tyranny, it is because the Spanish Communists have carried even further than the Italians the evaluation of Stalinism, and to an extent of Leninism, begun by Togliatti in Italy in 1956. This was the same analysis conducted in the middle '50s by the John Gates faction of the American CP. In 1956 Togliatti criticized the circular reasoning that the Soviet Communists applied to the Stalin phenomenon. Stalinism was the fault of the "cult of the individual"; Stalinism and Stalin were the fault of Joseph Stalin. Togliatti suggested that this was a mockery of Marxism, let alone of common sense, the latter being far more powerful a force for reason and logic than the former. The revisionism of Togliatti in Italy was applied rigorously by Gates in America and then extended into the experience of the Spanish Communists under Carrillo.

This revisionism was deepest in Spain, but more massive and meaningful in Italy, and no more than a facade in France. The French Communists under George Marchais adopted "Eurocommunism" and unanimously "rejected" the dictatorship of the proletariat in the same way that they had accepted Stalinism and the dictatorship of the proletariat before.

III

FROM THE STORMS that blew over the Communist countries and through the Communist movements in 1956 came a reaffirmation of a basic fact of contemporary political experience—there's a "Kronstadt" in every Communist movement. There was a rebellion against the Soviet regime by the workers and sailors of the Kronstadt naval base in 1921. It was not an antisocialist rebellion, as the Communists said at the time. It was a defense of the *promises* of the 1917 revolution in Russia. It was a protest against the betrayal of those promises that were made immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power. It was a rebellion against Lenin and Trotsky. This, too, bears emphasis because many who come to the study of Communism in a scholarly manner and with high ideals come with illusions about the purity of Leninism as compared with the absolute tyranny of Stalinism.

Some 15,000 Kronstadt sailors and workers demonstrated on March 1, 1921, in solidarity with some of the demands of the workers of Petrograd who were striking not only for economic demands but for free elections to factory committees and soviets. The demands of the Kronstadt demonstration were also for new elections to the soviets by secret ballot and with unrestricted political freedom. They demanded freedom of assembly and liberation of political prisoners, because by this time there were more dissident socialist prisoners in Soviet jails than supporters of the bourgeoisie. They demanded the right of peasants to own their own land and the right of all workers and peasants to assemble, to organize, to agitate—to receive the freedom that was promised to them.

True, there is an enormous gulf between the theory and practice of Lenin and of Stalin. But it did not prove to be an unbridgeable gulf. Lenin and Trotsky ordered the machine-gunning of the Kronstadt rebels. Suppression feeds on itself. Only days after the Bolshevik seizure of power the opposition press was banned as "poisoners of the mind of the people." A rereading of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* might cause some wonder among those who were enthusiastic about Reed and about Trotsky's explanation that "the closing of the newspapers is a legitimate measure of defense." How scornful the Leninists were of such Bolsheviks as Karelin who protested the suppression of newspapers with these prophetic words: "Three weeks ago the Bolsheviki were the most ardent defenders of the freedom of the press. . . . The arguments in this resolution suggest singularly the point of view of the old Black Hundreds and the censors of the Czarist regime—for they also talked of 'poisoners of the mind of the people.'"

So it was that the early but burgeoning tyranny of Lenin and Trotsky (*only* a few concentration camps, *only* hundreds and then several thousand killed in reprisals) became the monstrous tyranny of Stalin.

The 1950s saw many "Kronstadts," notably in East Germany, in Poland, above all in Hungary. On October 23, 1956, student demonstrations in Budapest led to the placarding of the city with demands for evacuation of Soviet troops from Hungarian soil, elections by secret ballot in the Hungarian Workers' party, and a long list of requirements adding up to a free and democratic socialism for Hungary. The uprising that followed was as spontaneous and broad-based as the revolution that overthrew the Czarist regime in Russia in March, 1917. Nevertheless, both Jessica Mitford and Peggy Dennis view the Hungarian uprising as a dark manipulation of "fascist" forces. The extraordinary thing about the 1956 events was the extent of support from workers in the most far-flung parts of Hungary. But in the Mitford version of "a fine old conflict," she prettifies the regime against which the entire Hungarian people arose in 1956.

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More than two decades after the Hungarian Communists themselves had admitted that their pre-1956 regime was a police state in which first Rakosi and then Gero ruled with an iron fist and with the secret police as the major instrument of political repression, Mitford writes of her 1955 visit to Hungary and reaffirms "everything we saw of socialist accomplishment." She rereads her dispatches to the *People's World* and finds them—not misleading, not refuted by events that horrified democrats and socialists—merely "rather tedious." Mitford is still enthusiastic about the "exhilarating experience" of discovering the sumptuous food enjoyed by the collective farmers. Her husband Bob, born in Hungary, "was particularly struck by the evident prosperity and sense of progress we found everywhere." No less than "everywhere." Shortly after they left, the people rebelled—*everywhere*. True, Mitford attempts an explanation, the Hungarian people were "manipulated by the CIA from without and counterrevolution from within."

On a Potemkin tour Mitford might not have been able to see everything as it was then in Hungary. But here it is, 21 years later when she should have been able to go back and review Hungary's tragic history, and all she sees is confirmation that the Hungarian Freedom Fighters were "grasping, neo-fascist types." "Fascist" types, such as Anna Kethly, the Hungarian socialist leader who declared in November when Russian tanks were ranging everywhere to put down the rebellion: "The Hungary of tomorrow will be a socialist state. . . . We must be watchful so that the results of the Revolution do not disappear, as was the case in 1919."

Though she admits that terrible revelations were made by Khrushchev, Mitford stands by the "socialist" achievements of pre-1956 Hungary despite everything that even the current rulers of Hungary have admitted. As to the prosperity that she and Bob saw in 1955, she could have used some of the 22 years since that visit to research what both the Russian and Hungarian Communists divulged about the declining economic standards brought about by the Stalinist pre-1956 regime. Rakosi and other Hungarian leaders had been summoned to Moscow after Stalin died in 1953. The Hungarians could say little when the Russians accused them of bringing the Hungarian economy to the verge of collapse.

Peggy Dennis takes strong exception to the denunciation of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 by the *Daily Worker* under the editorship of John Gates. She admits that the struggle of the Hungarian people had started as a "people's rebellion" but then adds that "the fascist elements grouped around Cardinal Mindszenty had turned the people's rebellion into a blood bath." Dennis complains that the *Daily Worker* at the time did not provide a "factual analysis" of what was happening in Budapest. This brings us to a fascinating failure of both Mitford and Dennis to review some of the factual information the *Daily Worker* and the *People's World* were getting from Budapest in that fall of 1956. First of all, the London *Daily Worker* correspondent in Budapest at the end of October, Peter Freyer, had refuted the reports of a fascist counterrevolution. He did note that many of the secret police who were universally hated had been killed during the uprising, but that this had in no way deprived the uprising of its popular character; it only pointed up the universal feeling about a secret police that had even pulled out the fingernails of Janos Kadar, later installed as the head of the Hungarian government by the Russians.

But even more intriguing is the correspondence that came to the *Daily Worker* and *People's World* from Freyer's successor, Sam Russell, who covered the events in Budapest after the second Soviet tank invasion starting on November 4. Russell was chosen because of his political reliability and indeed he remained in the British CP long after these events. But he was a reporter, and he was with the Hungarian workers at the huge Csepel and Dunapentele steel and machine works. He sent dispatches describing the Budapest workers' councils as the real and unanimous representatives of *all* the workers. He wrote about a strike without a single scab as an example of worker solidarity such as he had rarely seen anywhere else in the world. He tried to put the best face possible on the Russians, and in one dispatch he described a worker delegation that had gone to the Russians to negotiate and though the Hungarians remained unpersuaded, they suggested that possibly "the devil was not as black as he was painted." This was a loyal British Communist writing about the Soviet fatherland as a devil, if perhaps not quite as terrible as pictured. What a pleasure it was for the *Daily Worker* editor, Gates, and for his foreign editor, myself, to spread the dispatches from the Csepel factories across five columns above the masthead. Here was a class struggle and a national liberation struggle in all its glory. But drowned in blood.

It is instructive to see how Vivian Gornick manages to cast those who supported the

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Hungarian rebellion and sought to eradicate Stalinism from the American CP as the ugly Communists who did not manage to maintain the "wholeness," the "passion" and the "moral imagination" of the clear-cut hero of her interviews. The hero of her "romance" is called Lanzetti. His "Marxism," she writes, "is, indeed, not so much a political doctrine as it is a philosophical perspective, a piece of truth that lives inside him with such sure knowledge it is not necessary for him to sacrifice reality to theory." Truth? Reality? On the page before, Gornick writes about Lanzetti:

> For, if you meet him today and in his presence you attack the Party or Stalin or the Soviet Union, he flies into a passion and cries: "Don't talk to me about the atrocities of Stalin! He only killed Russians! We kill *everyone*. Don't talk to me about Vietnam, the energy crisis and Watergate, and then dare to tell me what is wrong with the people and the Party and the movement that I represent and will belong to with honor as long as I live.

Quite apart from the incongruity of comparing Stalin's killing of millions with America killing "everyone" there is the "technical" matter of Stalin killing only Russians. In the Luxe Hotel where Trepper lived and where Gene and Peggy Dennis lived, Stalin killed Finns and Poles, Italians and French, Germans and Spaniards, and the list could go on until we exhausted all the "national" parties affiliated with the Comintern. It has been accurately noted that Stalin killed far more Communist leaders and far more rank-and-file Communists than Hitler did. Trepper describes how Stalin ordered the murder of every member of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party! He tells how Togliatti sat on the Comintern tribunal that condemmed Bela Kun, the leader of the Hungarian Communist revolution of 1919, to die as an imperialist spy.

IV

WHAT THEN can be gleaned from these books about the Communist experience? From the Gornick book, precious little. You wouldn't even learn the name of the organization when it was transformed under Browder; she got that wrong. Her chronology is all wrong. The reader of the Mitford book would learn as little about CP history and politics, but a little bit more of what an experience it was to fight for Negro rights and to go to the Deep South in the fight to save the life of Willie McGee.

What then was the Communist experience? Obviously, it had to be many different things. It included high idealism and passion, self-sacrifice, and often a great brotherhood among its adherents.

But when examining the Communist experience, far more emphasis should be devoted, I think, to the rebellion of the Communist when confronted with the betrayal of his ideal, more accurately, when the Communist perceives that betrayal. Call it revisionism, a Kronstadt, Titoism, nationalism, workers' control, democratic centralism, the Workers' Opposition, self-determination. Call it the Hungarian rebellion of 1956, the Czechoslovak struggle in 1968, the German workers battling Soviet tanks in 1953, the children of Moscow fighting Beria's police troops in the streets on the day of Stalin's funeral. Call it revolt of the damned at Kolyma, call it Trotskyism, Bukharinism, a right-wing, a left-wing, a left-cum-right deviation. Call them Djilas, Mikhailov, Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, Scharansky; call them the bearers of wreaths to Chou En-lai's memorial; liquidators, economists, even God Seekers. Call it whatever you will, there is this built-in spark of rebellion against Communist tyranny and betrayal in almost every Communist heart.

What are the great moments in the experience of this former Communist? One such moment is half-described in Peggy Dennis's book. She tells about an article her husband had written for the *Daily Worker* in 1956; more important, it was written for and appeared in Moscow's *Pravda*. It was a careful, oh so restrained criticism of Stalin. But Peggy Dennis censors the account of that article as it appeared in *Pravda*. The Communist world had learned a few days after Stalin died that one of his crimes had been the murder of the entire top ranks of the Soviet Union's Yiddish writers.

The very first foreign Communist article critical of Stalin ever to appear in the Soviet press was written by Eugene Dennis. Making every effort not to offend the then Soviet leaders, who themselves were up to their ears in Stalin's terror, Dennis wrote of "the shocking crimes and crass violations of socialist law and ethics." He condemned "the use of tortures, rigged trials . . . and snuffing out of lives of more than a score of Jewish cultural figures." But even at that time, after Stalin, the word Jewish was an alarming sign of impending heresy to those who had survived in Soviet leadership. So, in printing the Dennis article, *Pravda* cut out the reference to the murder of all the leading Jewish literary figures!

But Dennis never complained about this

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censorship. Nor does Peggy Dennis, 21 years later, summon up the candor or courage to relate how *Pravda* mutilated her husband's article. She gets around that episode by omitting the fact that *Pravda* reprinted it.

What pleasure it was for me, then foreign editor of a *Daily Worker* edited by John Gates, to write about the phrase that *Pravda* eliminated from the article. "If the charge was untrue, all *Pravda* had to do was to deny it. . . . Deleting the phrase from Dennis's article solved no problems for *Pravda* or for anyone else. It only compounds the wrong that was done in the first place. Candor, not suppression, is called for."

Which illuminates an aspect of "Kronstadt" that makes it such a stunning part of the Communist experience. When Vivian Gornick presents her scurrilous portrayal of her arch villain, the man she calls Bitterman, the man who wanted to deprive her of the "romance of Communism," she quotes him as saying, "The things we did, the lies we told. . . ." Gornick also quotes Richard Crossman as an early culprit in this regard, for he had written: "Once the renunciation has been made, the mind, instead of operating freely, becomes the servant of a higher and unquestioned purpose. To deny the truth is an act of service. . . ." What is one to make of such sentences, Gornick asks? What one should make of them is, indeed, that those sentences quite accurately describe the minds of *Pravda's* editors, of Dennis and, sadly, of Peggy Dennis even now. If there were truly ecstatic moments in the Communist experience they came when the mind was suddenly freed from the obligation to conform to a "higher" verity. That was why 1956 was such a singular year for many of us.

For thousands of others it had come earlier. What a wonderful time it was for some who spoke their minds when the Moscow trials took place in the '30s! If nothing else, freeing one's mind at that time spared many Communists the necessity of accepting the proposition that Bukharin had tried to assassinate Lenin.

What could have been a better time than the year when Molotov told the Communist world that fascism was "a matter of taste," when Stalin leered at the world standing by the side of Herr von Ribbentropp? What better moment for mind and conscience than the time when the Nazi-Soviet pact unleashed World War II? And what is one to make of a book such as Gornick's, which cannot fathom the gulf between a free and sovereign mind and one that is the servant of a "higher and unquestioned" purpose?

How suitable the phrase, "renunciation of the mind" in the light of Peggy Dennis's Moscow experiences. She arrived there with Gene, who was to work in the Comintern, in 1931. She quickly discovered that an iron curtain separated foreign Communists from Soviet citizens, except those at the Luxe. "No one could give me a plausible reason why this was so," she writes. She and Gene developed warm friendships with others at the Luxe. These included "Boris" a China expert, "Bob" whose specialty was India, Boris's wife "Musa," on the faculty of the Soviet Institute of Red Professors, and Bob's wife "Valerie" who was studying at a Party school.

Gene and Peggy finally left Moscow, but they were back for more in 1937. This time they could find no trace of Boris or Musa, Bob or Valerie. Only on her third visit to Moscow in 1941 did she see Valerie walking in her direction on Gorky Street. "I started to greet her warmly, but she passed me with a slight flicker of recognition," Peggy writes. She then implored her comrades to tell her what had happened and she learned that Bob had been executed, Boris and Musa disappeared never to be seen among the living, and Valerie must not be approached. "I was told for her sake to leave her alone." Why was all this happening? Peggy Dennis discovered that, "In the purges of the Comintern in 1937 and 1938, the very international activity and foreign travel demanded by the Comintern became the basis of charges of 'foreign agent' that sent hundreds of Soviet and European Comintern workers to labor camps and firing squads."

Peggy Dennis's friends were murdered in the '30s, 20 years before the Khruschchev speech. Peggy learned about that in Moscow at the time; but she had made that renunciation of mind, that relinquishing of conscience, and there was always Gene to explain it to her. If there are mysteries that Gornick must probe it is not the Crossman quote, but how people accepted such renunciation of mind.

Trepper rejects the notion that his was a wasted life. He feels pride and satisfaction for the part he played in the war against the Nazis. But his book and his experience is sharply distinguished from those of Gornick, Mitford, and Dennis. Trepper heaps scorn on those Communist leaders who feigned astonishment after the 20th Congress in 1956. He calls to account all who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine; all, he says, are collectively responsible. And he writes, "I am no exception to this verdict."

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Within the Soviet Union in the '30s, Trepper says, only the Trotskyists can lay claim to the honor of having resisted. "By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tundra."

Though an ever advancing socialization of life imposes social responsibility and social action on the individual, it is the person who remains essential and sovereign. Brought to a violation of the human condition and of human rights the individual, even the Communist as individual, discovers that "the only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others." And Communists will harbor ever new "Kronstadts" because, "Over himself, over his body and mind, the individual is sovereign," whether or not he knows that the words are those of John Stuart Mill. □

Lewis Coser

Intellectuals on Tap

TWO CHEERS FOR CAPITALISM, by Irving Kristol. New York: Basic Books. xiv and 274 pp. $10.

A specter is haunting Irving Kristol—the specter of The New Class. It consists of "some millions of people whom liberal capitalism has sent to college in order to help manage its affluent, highly technological, mildly paternalistic 'post-industrial society.'" These educators, journalists, city planners, social workers, editors, and civil servants constitute, so Kristol argues, a clear and present danger to the good, that is the business, society. It is against them that he directs, to borrow from Dr. Johnson, his "stratagems of well-bred malignity."

There seems to be a paradox here: Irving Kristol, editor of the *Public Interest, Wall Street Journal* columnist, and Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University, seems by all counts to be a member of the class on which he heaps so much obloquy. Is this a case of self-hatred? Not really, the paradox is only apparent. It is not The New Class as such that he denounces but the values most of its members espouse and the power to which they allegedly aspire. Kristol defends virtue and the Protestant Ethic and is hence exempt from class biases as he rides into battle against those members of The New Class, evidently the great majority, who have departed from the path of rectitude by displaying "a habitual animus to the business community."

The ideology of The New Class, the author argues, is an "'un-American' thing" that has only fairly recently been imported from Europe. Like parrot fever, it is an infection that did not grow on native soil but was brought over from corrupt Europe. Those so infected may still use the rhetoric of liberalism but they are really socialists or at least social democrats who worship before the shrine of ever increasing state intervention. "Though they continue to speak the language of 'progressive reform,'" says Kristol,

> in actuality they are acting upon a hidden agenda: to propel the nation from that modified version of capitalism we call "the welfare state" toward an economic system so stringently regulated in detail, as to fulfill many of the hidden anti-capitalist aspirations of the Left.

Or, to be more specific, "the professional classes of our modern bureaucratized societies are engaged in a class struggle with the business community for status and power." This struggle is largely conducted, so our author avers, under the banner of equality. The ideologists of The New Class claim that they are appalled at the inequalities of American society, at the scandal of poverty in the midst of affluence. But all this is only camouflage. What the game is really about is power. "What it comes down to is that our *nuovi uomini* are persuaded they can do a better job of running our society" than the business elite. They lust for power and are greedy for influence. Sitting in the offices of the federal bureaucracy, in the common rooms of major universities, in editorial offices and in the plush seats of media control, they attempt to wrest power from the denizens of executive suites, and so help undermine the legitimate authority of our business civilization.

Now all this might be dismissed as a kind of paranoid fantasy. I can find no evidence whatsoever that social workers or city planners, popular journalists and public-interest lawyers share a

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coherent ideological stance or aspire to bring The New Class to power. But as we know ever since W. I. Thomas's famous dictum, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." We have come to recognize that even the most outlandish definitions of the situation may have consequences if people come to believe them. There are no witches, of course, but if people believe in witches they have been known to viciously kill old women so perceived. Even though members of The New Class may never have harbored the drives and designs Kristol attributes to them, his attack against them, though this may not be his intention, makes them sitting ducks for vicious assaults by all those anti-intellectual forces that have for long awaited an occasion to attack the spirit of modernity and its proponents. Kristol is, to be sure, a gentle and civilized man, yet one cannot help but feel that Nixon and his entourage of blackguards may have learned much from him when they established their "enemies list."

What strikes one about this book is the human callousness it displays throughout. How else is one to describe a sentence such as the following: "A nation whose politics revolves around such issues as day-care centers or school lunches or the 'proper' cost of false teeth is a nation whose politics is squalid, mean-spirited, debasing. Young people growing up in such a society will find in it little to be respected, nothing to be revered." Tell this to mothers on welfare, to the millions of women who scrape for a meager living on inadequate paychecks, or to the elderly for whom the cost of false teeth may indeed be a vital matter.

AT TIMES Kristol's insensitivity reaches positively Victorian proportions. The voice may be Kristol's but the spirit is that of Mr. Gradgrind. Who else could complain about the exorbitant cost of the welfare state by pointing to the fact that "new health regulations in the cotton industry will, in the period from 1977 through 1983, cost some $3 billion." Why indeed should taxpayers such as Kristol pay to protect the lungs of textile workers against occupational diseases? Why indeed, unless of course, they are just power-hungry intellectuals and humanitarian sob sisters?

Kristol is not content with denouncing the evil designs of The New Class; he has the courage of his convictions and is hence prepared to offer his advice to the much maligned business classes on how to refurbish their tarnished image so as to be properly armed in the coming struggle for power with socialist levelers, those opponents of the Protestant virtues and the spirit of enlightened capitalism. Taking a leaf from his Marxist opponents, he is not content with theory but wishes to weld it to *Praxis*.

The trouble with capitalists, we learn, has been that they are oblivious of their true interests, that they have been much too indiscriminate when dispensing their largesses to institutions such as universities and foundations, which sustain The New Class. Much of these monies, it appears, went to men and women who are the determined class enemies of those on whose benefactions they thrive. This must end! "Foundations and universities," says Kristol, "are the idea-germinating and idea-legitimizing institutions of our society" and they hence need to be protected from the designs of modern levelers. Academic freedom, he says piously, must of course be preserved. Yet,

> on the other hand, it does not follow that businessmen or corporations have any obligation to give money to institutions whose views or attitudes they disapprove of. . . . If [these institutions] are indifferent to the good opinion [of any particular segment of the population] they will just have to learn to be indifferent to the money too.

In other words, preserve the sanctity of academic freedom and just starve those who think otherwise than the business community and are "inimical to corporate survival."

But to starve out your enemies isn't enough, you must also reward your friends. "A more positive step. . . . would be for corporations to give support to those elements of the 'new class'—and they exist, if not in large numbers—which do believe in the preservation of a strong private sector."

> If you decide to go exploring for oil you find a competent geologist. Similarly, if you wish to make a productive investment in the intellectual and educational worlds, you find competent intellectuals and scholars—dissident members as it were of the "new class" to offer guidance.

Just ask Kristol, he will tell you how to sort out friends and enemies, and teach you how to reward men and women associated with the conservative American Enterprise Institute (with which Kristol is associated), and to punish those subversive elements that people the offices of the Brookings Institute or, worse still, the Center for Policy Study. Intellectuals, Kristol avers, should be held on a short leash lest they turn obstreperous. Never to be allowed on top, they should always be on tap.

Not all that Kristol has to say is of a similar crudity. In fact, most of the time he talks in a

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suavely modulated voice about our modern predicaments. He counsels us to return to the wisdom of the ancients, to Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and to Coleridge, Carlyle, and Newman. But would any of these men, one may wonder, have had anything but contempt for kept ideologists of captains of industry and barons of the boardroom? Coleridge, it is true, dreamed of a "new clerisy" to provide guidance for a society that had lost its religious moorings, but he would hardly have thought kindly of the idea that it be endowed by General Motors and the American Enterprise Institute. □

Jeffrey Levi

Political Prisoner in Cuba

SEPT ANS À CUBA, 38 MOIS DANS LES PRISONS DE FIDEL CASTRO, by Pierre Golendorf. Paris: Editions Pierre Belfond, 1976, 320 pp.

As Cuban-American relations move toward normalization, Pierre Golendorf's account of his experiences in Cuba and its prisons from 1967 until his expulsion in 1974 offers a sobering perspective on the "success" of the Cuban revolution. A French Communist, Golendorf moved to Cuba in 1967 to participate in what he saw as a true revolution. He sought to become part of Cuban society and to contribute to the revolution working as a photographer, teacher, and translator. In time, he became discouraged by the problems of the revolution: its huge bureaucracy, economic failures, political repression, and the cult of personality around Fidel. This discontent was quite moderately and quietly expressed. But when he sought to return to France along with his Cuban wife and child,[1] he was denied permission and was arrested as an agent of the CIA. Golendorf's story of the horrendous prison conditions and the "revolutionary justice" of the Cuban legal system is one that could well have been told by countless others about Cuba—had they the good fortune to escape from Cuba as Golendorf did. His story is made all the more interesting because it is a critique coming from a true believer.

Golendorf reports that in Cuba the hand of the government can be felt everywhere. Though only a small country of less than 9 million people, and despite a revolution that allegedly swept away the machinery of the past, Golendorf encountered a mammoth, Kafkaesque bureaucracy that rendered even the simplest activities impossibly complicated. First, of course, there was the rationing of all basic food commodities, despite Castro's claims that the successes of agricultural planning and reform had increased production phenomenally. Golendorf received a large living stipend but had to beg for productive work. When he finally did work, teaching or preparing exhibitions, he found himself encumbered by seemingly capricious changes of regulations or policy as to which artists were politically acceptable, as to where and when he was to lecture. (Schools would be closed over night if students dared to protest some government policy, though the official reason for the closing would be a period of labor in the countryside.) Golendorf sought to participate in some of these field experiences but could never obtain official permission. He finally did so without official sanction.

In June 1969, when Golendorf sought exit visas for himself and his family, he was (deliberately) sent from agency to agency, and repeatedly told that someone else was responsible. Just as things seemed to be working out, he was arrested.

Surprisingly, Golendorf found that most Cubans believed the bureaucracy was working against the intentions of, rather than for, Fidel. Even in the prisons, he found Cubans arguing that if only Fidel would hear their case things would be different and they would receive justice, and refusing to see the bureaucracy as an instrument of Fidel's personal power.

The manner in which the Cubans handled Golendorf's case and imprisonment is worthy of anything the Soviet system has to offer. He was in prison for 38 months, and was in solitary confinement for most of the six months preceeding his trial. He was also briefly "hospitalized"—where he was drugged (allegedly receiving only Vitamin C injections) and again questioned.

Golendorf never consulted a lawyer throughout the case; although he was entitled to one, the prosecutor who conducted the intensive questioning advised him against it. He was visited by an official of the French embassy on several oc-

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casions, but with little accomplished and always in the presence of the prosecutor or a guard.

Golendorf was accused of being a CIA agent—a charge based on notes found in his diaries that were critical of his experiences in Cuba. The prosecution alleged these notes were the basis of a book Golendorf planned to publish in France, not a private diary as he maintained. All his other activities, starting with his first trip, were interpreted as part of a grand design to infiltrate Cuba and establish a network of informants.

THE CASE against Golendorf was not so readily revealed. According to the Cuban system, the defendant is expected to establish his own guilt: he is questioned and prodded by the prosecution until he produces an acceptable self-critique, detailing his crimes against the revolution. Self-criticism was the only way out of prison. The prosecutor reminded Golendorf repeatedly that "we know all—we possess all the proof of your guilt." "Never forget," he said, "that you are in our hands, that no one can get you out but yourself."

Golendorf refused to cooperate in his own undoing and thus stood trial. The "revolutionary justice" he received was from a military tribunal before which he was accused by a military public prosecutor and "defended" by an attorney appointed by the military. The prosecution asked for a 25-year sentence. Golendorf received "only" ten years.

Just before going to trial, Golendorf entered the large network of political prisons. Except for a brief return to solitary confinement (as punishment for having made an attempt to appeal his case) Golendorf spent his remaining time in this network. These were quite large prisons, dating mostly from the Batista era. The prisons held both common criminals and political prisoners, though in separate sections. (The political prisoners were also divided by degree of counterrevolutionary obstinacy.) Golendorf felt that preferences were given to common criminals, since the regime saw more hope of "reforming" them. Golendorf estimated that there are 20,000 political prisoners in Cuba, and 8,000 to 9,000 of them in Havana province where he was held. He says there were up to 10,000 political arrests per year. (These are similar to estimates made by other observers.) According to Golendorf, about 80 percent of the political prisoners were *lancheros:* young people, for the most part, who had tried to escape to the United States. In fact, many of the *lancheros* had not even attempted to escape; they may simply have mentioned considering the idea and their boastful talk was reported to the security police.

Golendorf was held at two prisons: Principe and La Cabaña. Hubert Matos, one of the leaders of the revolution, was also held at Principe.[2] Matos was [is] held in solitary confinement, never permitted to step outside his small cell, the window to his cell sealed off by an iron plate even under the hot summer sun. Golendorf was moved to La Cabaña, a prison run by the military, after Principe was closed. Many of these prison transfers were made for cosmetic reasons: to show foreign visitors that the prisons dating from Batista's rule were being shut down, with no mention that the prisoners had simply been moved elsewhere. When presented in public, prisoners were seen in civilian clothes and without handcuffs—to give the impression of a happy, well-treated lot.

Of course, these were not claimed to be ordinary prisons. They were supposed to reeducate the prisoner for reintegration into Cuban society. The only reeducation that took place, according to Golendorf, was that extracted by time—the prisoners' moral, intellectual, and physical destruction. Work camps were designed as an intermediary step between prison and release. At these camps, prisoners labored ten hours a day. Their accomplishments are incredible, if Castro's figures of the number of schools, factories, and amount of farm work these camps have produced are to be believed. From these figures, Golendorf estimated there were from 20,000 to 30,000 workers in such camps. While paid the same as regular workers, they toil under harsh conditions, are overworked and underfed, and are forced to achieve huge quotas—in the vague hope of receiving a reduced sentence.

Finally, something must be said of the security apparatus, the secret police that manage to fill up these political prisons. Clearly, their presence is pervasive—even if only judging from the detailed accounting they were able to give Golendorf of his own actions. Though the opposition to the revolution is said to have ended, the regime still justifies the need for a security apparatus by the great number of enemies within Cuba, a contradiction on its face. Golendorf maintains that the security police penetrate every part of Cuban society—aided by the Cuban propensity to talk quite freely—and even within prison, surveillance does not stop.

IT IS NOT just wide-eyed American congressmen who are being unduly impressed with Castro and

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his revolution. Even the hard-nosed realist George Kennan wrote recently:

> A number of Americans have recently returned from Cuba favorably impressed in a number of respects, with what they have seen there: with evident improvements in the lot of the people at large, with the degree of support the regime appears to enjoy, with the absence of Soviet-type security precautions, with the relaxed and friendly way they themselves were received. It is hard to judge the accuracy of these reports, but they have been so frequently heard that one is obliged to suppose that the general picture they convey is a correct one.[3]

The evidence Golendorf presents thoroughly contradicts such a generalization; his experience made him more aware of the manner in which Castro manipulates foreign impressions. In retrospect, Golendorf came to see that his original 2½-month stay in Cuba in 1967 had also been engineered. He was led everywhere: well-received, never encountering any of the difficulties he knew Cuba was facing. When asked about these problems, his Cuban guides would not acknowledge any of them—whether political, economic, or ideological. Golendorf tells of the care taken to distance the Cuban population from foreigners: forbidding any contact with them, making sure—through the use of police in civilian clothes—that no unauthorized Cubans entered the hotels where foreign tourists might be staying. Thus, foreign visitors see only what Cuban authorities choose for them to see.

It is the policy of the Carter administration to make human-rights issues an important part of its foreign policy. Golendorf's experience, along with thousands of similar ones, provides ample evidence of gross violation of human rights in Cuba. No outsiders can or should force change on Cuba. It can only be hoped that when stories such as these are told often enough, even Castro's friends will tell him that if he hopes to gain better relations with the United States (and whatever economic/political benefits may accrue as a result), then some strong gesture regarding political prisoners must be made. □

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[1]Golendorf was released from prison and immediately expelled from Cuba in 1974. His wife and daughter were not permitted to leave with him.

[2]Matos was arrested in October 1959 and is still in prison 18 years later: Castro's revenge for Matos's sin of seeking to resign his position as Chief of the Second Military District in Camaguey because of his concern over growing Communist influence on Castro.

[3]George Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger*, p. 64. □

Elaine Spitz

Rights, Rules, and Rebellion

TAKING RIGHTS SERIOUSLY, by Ronald Dworkin. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 293 pp. $12.

THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTS, by Richard Flathman. Cambridge, London, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. 250 pp. $15.95.

Everyone believes in rights. Everyone believes that rights should be taken seriously. But what precisely *are* rights, and what does it mean to take them seriously?

Take the simple assertion: I have a right to do (or not to do) X. Is this a legal or a moral claim, or both?

H. L. A. Hart and the reigning school of legal positivism opt for the first alternative: a right is whatever a valid law says it is; and the validity of a law is determined not by the rightness of its moral content but by the fact that a properly constituted authority enacted it. Jeremy Bentham and certain of his disciples would judge such legal claims by a moral standard, but since their moral standard is utilitarianism (the greatest happiness of the greatest number), no alleged right would seem to be safe from attack where the infringement upon that right is believed to promote the common good. Thus, in both views rights have only a precarious standing: legal positivism recognizes no rights, no moral claims, outside the explicit body of laws; utilitarianism provides no sure ground for holding rights inviolable.

Ronald Dworkin and Richard Flathman believe that human rights merit greater protection. Each thinks he has a better way to defend the notion of rights, to take them seriously.

WITHOUT MORAL UNDERPINNINGS, Dworkin argues, many laws are unintelligible. The "law" of baseball, for example, must be understood to include not only a "statute" that prohibits a player from physically intimidating an umpire but also a moral code that makes clear what counts as physical intimidation (e.g., making a fist versus sticking out one's tongue). Positivist jurisprudence ignores this moral element and limits law to authoritative enactments plus a few legal rules, such as the strictures about precedent. According-

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ly, when decisions require additional rules (e.g., to determine, in baseball, what constitutes intimidation), the discretion of the umpire, and in law of the judge, is held to be paramount.

Dworkin rejects this notion that the discretion of the judge explains the infusion into law of moral principles not already in the statute. He contends that it is not a matter of discretion at all. General rules, he says, are always necessary to the interpretation of laws; such rules are always normative; and they always inject into the law of any legal system a particular set of moral principles. Judges do not ignore or create these principles; they try to discover and apply them.

But which set of moral principles—yours or mine—does the judge invoke? Do social norms yield a monolithic set of principles? Are not principles congenitally controversial?

A case can be made for the absolute standing of a principle, and for its appropriate weight, Dworkin says, by appealing to "an amalgam of practice and other principles in which the implications of legislative and judicial history figure along with appeals to community practices and understandings." Those principles (and the rights and duties they prescribe) that best fit in with the whole legal system are, and ought to be, recognized as the correct principles. Dworkin uses this approach to defend "reverse discrimination," desegregation, and civil disobedience.

The coherence of the legal system is guaranteed, in Dworkin's view, by its alleged embodiment of an Ideal, a fundamental standard implicit in "the amalgam" and extractable by reason. Utilitarianism cannot serve as that appropriate standard because it recognizes no individual's claim to a right against the majority's wishes—and this, obviously, cannot be squared with our Bill of Rights, which says otherwise. Thus, although judges make mistakes, change their minds as new situations arise, and even disagree with one another, there is (in this theory) only one right answer as to whether or not an individual has a right. Judges find that answer as best they can and then secure that right. In the United States, this guiding Ideal is (for Dworkin) the principle of equal respect and concern for all.

Obligatory compliance with the laws and rules might be expected to follow from their association with justice. One cannot disobey, it would seem, by appealing to another morality, for the law already incorporates the only valid morality, i.e., the only one relevant to our system. But Dworkin rejects this conclusion and insists that one may legitimately disobey. He argues that a system of law that recognizes moral rights and also arouses dissidence over policies allegedly violating rights will almost always have a doubtful proposition on its hands. Hence, the law must always allow latitude for testing the rules and should always be lenient with dissenters.

In sum, this ingenious, stirringly written, and provocative book claims that one political philosophy, namely our own, can simultaneously embrace inalienable rights, strict interpretation of legal rules, and ample room for rebellion.

Dworkin's analysis is open to several lines of criticism. It can be argued that he misinterprets the American experience, especially the meaning of equality. Dworkin might find it difficult, if not impossible, to show that equality has traditionally been understood in America as the supreme value from which all others are derived; or that equality meant to the Founding Fathers more than the restricted notion of all being considered equally able to be a free and independent people (no less than, say, the English), or all being equally able to assent to or dissent from a social contract establishing the civil society; or all being equal before the law.

Utilitarians who do not share Bentham's view that push-pin is as good as poetry will contest the adequacy of Dworkin's attack on their doctrine and insist that the principle of utility can and does successfully protect rights by looking, as John Stuart Mill insisted one should, to "the permanent interests of man as a progressive being" rather than to the satisfaction of immediate or short-term concerns and to the neglect of higher values. Nor is it altogether clear why the "one right answer" to what rights we actually possess (that Dworkin insists our judges endeavor to discover) should prove so elusive on questions involving civil disobedience (so that Dworkin urges judges to be flexible) but stringent (and hence, in Dworkin's view, requiring inflexibility) in upholding cases of reverse discrimination. It is surely questionable whether a legal system, with all its inconsistencies, can (or does) incorporate a single perfectionist standard; in fact, strong arguments can be adduced in opposition to any closed-end description of human systems. *Dissent* readers might be disquieted, however, by the curious fact that, for all its advocacy of radical solutions to contemporary problems, Dworkin's book is rooted in profoundly conservative doctrines. A few brief comments should suffice to identify them:

(1) To save the law from moral vacuousness, Dworkin sacrifices the autonomy of morality. To

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tie morals, especially their weight and significance, to law as Dworkin does is to equate morality with a national and historically specific set of practices and arrangements. Thus, Dworkin says of moral rights: "what an individual is entitled to have, in civil society, depends upon both the practice and the justice of its political institutions." Jimmy Carter to the contrary, no Universal Declaration of Rights is possible, and no valid international comparison of rights can be made. But is not this conservative acceptance of conventional morality precisely what the great Western religions and philosophies protest against? "If I corrupt society," said the revolutionary Socrates at his trial, "tell me, who improves?" "The law," replied his accuser.

(2) Dworkin puts the recognition, and hence the assertion, of one's rights outside the province of the average citizen. Herculean feats of reason are obviously required to fashion a coherent and consistent entity out of all the moral principles, rules, statutes, and judicial decisions of a legal system. Such a task is clearly beyond the competence of the ordinary citizen; unaided, he can never form a sensible opinion about his own rights. But if one must depend upon professionals—legal philosophers, lawyers, and judges—to articulate one's rights, all intimacy between a person and his rights is destroyed. Indeed, when Dworkin defends the Vietnam war-resisters, he acknowledges that they would never have put their claims in defensible form; but he argues that their "real" will (as adduced from the logic of the case) and not their actual ideas are what the courts should have considered. Whatever else rights may be, for Dworkin they are not claims dependent on an individual's knowledge and will for their exercise. Rather, rights are community-defined and community-enforced norms.

(3) The enthronement of Herculean reason, that is, of those who reason best, leads Dworkin to affirm another familiar conservative tenent; namely, trust in an aristocracy of the robe. He does this, moreover, without any consideration of the proverbial wisdom that warns against the tendency of power to corrupt, and that calls attention to the role of reason as the servant rather than the master of the passions. Unlike Plato's philosopher-kings, Dworkin's new guardians of morals are not placed beyond the obvious temptations associated with families and wealth. Unlike John Rawls's ideally rational man, they are not hidden behind a veil of ignorance—so that they do not know their appetites, skills, and resources, and will consequently judge principles solely in terms of abstract reason, not in terms of their existing status and interests in society. Yet Dworkin entrusts moral decision-making to these (mostly corporate) lawyers in black robes rather than to democratically elected legislators. In legislative assemblies, after all, experience matters as much as theoretical knowledge, and in democratic theory he whom the shoe pinches properly prevails over any educated elite. Dworkin dismisses the idea of legislative supremacy by charging that legislators are the majority's mechanical puppets on matters of moral principle (especially minority rights), and asserting that judges—despite the evident fact that as voters they also form part of the majority or the minority—reason in court as neutrals.

Upon close scrutiny it turns out that to take rights seriously is to invite benevolent despotism. Rights can be protected only if they are attached to the truth we already know and with which we live, as that truth is expounded by the best students of our politics and morals, i.e., our judges. Dworkin's attack on positivism and utilitarianism must indeed be taken seriously, but his Idealist substitution is not an acceptable democratic alternative. Nevertheless, his book excites admiration for its fearless plunge into controversial matters, for its brilliant arguments, and great erudition. No one who reads it will be bored.

RICHARD FLATHMAN'S ATTEMPT to ground rights securely is less sprightly, a more painstaking but rewarding effort. Not least among its virtues, it contributes to our understanding of rights by correcting some popular misconceptions.

By a careful analysis of what rights mean in ordinary language, Flathman avoids many of the pitfalls that entrap Dworkin. In Flathman's view, a right is not an esoteric, semilegal, semimoral precept to be extricated by a society or a specialized elite from the communal bedrock. Instead, it is an individual's "warrant for taking or refusing to take an action" that he conceives to be advantageous to him and in which he wishes to indulge even though he knows (and it is generally believed) that his actions will disadvantage others. Here the term "rights" is connected with action that is irreducibly individual in some way, and is also believed to be good in some respect. This definition suggests that rights cannot be taken seriously when, as in Dworkin, an external and allegedly objective conception of them is substituted for an individual's own perceptions, when one's "real" will is given priority over one's actual assertion of subjective desires and beliefs. Further, rights

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involve a relationship, a claim of one person upon another. To secure rights, then, it becomes necessary to justify, (1), the idea of self-directed individual activity within a group, and, (2), actions by some that may have unpleasant consequences for others. Flathman devotes his book to these twin tasks.

A signal merit of Flathman's work is the intriguing description of individual rights as a social practice. To defend old-fashioned individualism, the author, in a new fashion, grants the essential communalism of rights. Rights, he says, are social phenomena because they depend upon socially defined rules and roles; they are part of a pattern of interaction among members of a community who share the same language, institutions, and arrangements, and who accept and act upon the same moral norms.

Each participant in this social activity must make unique choices and judgments about the appropriateness of applying commonly supported rules in a particular situation. A right, for example, can be insisted upon or waived, and only the holder of a right can decide. To claim a right is to claim respect for one's personal interests or objectives, especially from those inclined to disregard them. Thus, the practice of rights presupposes autonomous individuals with justifiable spheres of activity upon which others may not intrude, as well as a community that supports rights or, in some cases, supersedes them. Because individualism depends upon a social milieu for actualization, the concept of rights entails both irreducibly individual and indispensably social elements.

But of what value are rights? Why is it worthwhile to maintain them? Flathman's answer, which he calls "the liberal principle," roots the defense of rights in the fact that they enable individuals to "pursue interests, satisfy desires and achieve objectives." According to the liberal principle, it is a prima facie good for individuals to have and to be in a position to act upon and satisfy their purposes.

Since the pursuit of one's purposes may harm others, it is not always right to let people do what they want; but it is the objection to letting them do as they wish that requires justification, not their pursuit of self-interest. Such objections must be logically consistent. And they are always insufficient if they simply dismiss another's interests in the name of some alleged good, because the sphere of activity embraced by rights is also assumed to belong to the class of things called good until proved otherwise.

Such proof would depend upon a ranking of people's interests and desires, objectives and purposes, so that, when in conflict, those that would accomplish the most good would prevail. In the practice of rights as we know it in this country, certain rights—the great civil liberties—have been deemed so valuable that it is almost always considered wrong to qualify them in any way. The qualifying "almost," however, is significant, for violations of individual rights in the name of social needs are not unknown, and not always unwarranted.

In order to protect an area of action withheld from the community, to guarantee a concern for self along with subordination to the general good, Flathman realizes he must go beyond a defense of the individual's satisfaction of his private needs. Consequently, he appeals to a particular conception of citizenship, one in which the individual requires the protection of rights in order to participate effectively in public affairs. The ethics promoted by rights, he feels, will be protected by the community because rights further a society's need for such citizen participation. The high regard for rights in Western democracies offers empirical support for this theory and for the efficacy of rights in achieving the goals of what Flathman calls a civic individualism.

Defiance of the law in order to safeguard rights always remains a possibility. Here Flathman gives the rebel firmer support than Dworkin does, because dissent in his liberal principle derives from that irreducible individuality that is proclaimed by the very notion of rights. Thus, no social rule or law can dissolve the moral legitimacy of an assertion of rights.

For students of political philosophy, many of Flathman's careful distinctions—e.g., the distinct social roles that the practice of rights bestows upon holders of rights, government enforcers of rights, the general public, and those against whom rights are claimed—will undoubtedly become a source of fruitful discussion and further exploration. His expanded version of individualism certainly strengthens any utilitarian defense of rights. Despite these evident achievements, however, it is not clear that Flathman has provided rights with a secure place in the political firmament.

FLATHMAN'S OPTIMISTIC READING of Western experience with rights (shared with Dworkin) may be mistaken. That Western countries have a

(continued on page 360)

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LETTERS

On the Problem of Pornography

Editors:

A few observations on the discussion of pornography in your Spring 1978 issue ("The Problem of Pornography," by Murray Hausknecht, with comments by Lionel Abel, George P. Elliott, Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Irving Howe, and David Spitz). With regard to David Spitz's piece, surely Milton must be gyrating in his grave. It should be noted that the *Areopagitica* is concerned with religious differences only. It has nothing to do with the defense of erotic or pornographic materials, an indication that not all periods find the sexual as fascinating—or problematic—as ours does.

Would Milton advocate the censorship of pornographic materials if he were alive today? It is entirely probable. After his great defense of toleration, in a passage conveniently ignored by most liberals, Milton does advocate censorship—of atheism and Catholicism: "I mean not tolerated popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate. . . ." Furthermore, he goes on to say (and here the conservatives in the current controversy could help themselves to some ammunition, not that I am in their camp, either), "that also which is impious or evil absolutely, either against faith or manners, no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself. . . ."

In speaking of the necessity for man's freedom of choice, Spitz freely paraphrases Milton: "Those who would deny him that choice, who insist instead that he forsake his reason and his right to free decision-making and place his conscience into their custody, demand that he cease to be a mature and responsible individual." Are we here meant to have an image of the 42nd Street viewer as a free, responsible agent, exercising his reason and his free choice as he slumps in his seat, hidden from the daylight world, savoring the aroma of child porn? Milton's work is concerned with the search for truth, not sensation. To borrow his words in defense of the worst excesses of pornography is surely to make the worse appear the better reason.

When Cynthia Epstein speaks of some of her best male friends and colleagues being porn-movie regulars (hmn!), she is recognizing that there is acceptable porn and there is unacceptable porn. And I think we had all better make some distinctions such as she does.

I would start here. Murray Hausknecht remarks somewhat misleadingly that antifeminist forces opposed to the ERA and abortion are "reinforced by the zealous foes of porn," but he also goes on to say that feminists "worry about the image of women that porn encourages, and sometimes find themselves unsympathetic to traditional civil liberties. . . ." Which civil liberties? we might ask.

There is some irony in the fact that many notable civil libertarians, zealous of guarding the rights of minority groups, are perfectly willing to deny those same rights to that group called women, implying and sometimes stating directly that pornography (which is primarily directed against women) is far less obscene than that literature which is directed against racial and religious groups. In 1965 Howard Moody wrote in "Toward a New Definition of Obscenity" (*Christianity and Crisis,* January 25): "Should we not as Christians raise a new standard of 'obscenity' not obsessed with sex and vulgar language, but defined rather as that material which has as its dominant theme and purpose the debasement and depreciation of human beings—their worth and their dignity." I used to think that this kind of mistake could no longer be made, but now I'm not so sure. After all, it seems that there are still those who would support the showing of "Snuff" though they themselves would never dream of attending it. But would any liberal, or nonliberal for that matter, want or dare to support the right to freedom of speech for a film designed for pleasurable viewing that ended with the hacking to bits of blacks or Hispanics?

ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH
New York City

DAVID SPITZ REPLIES:

Milton's marital difficulties, not his religious views, led him to publish, without license, several pamphlets on divorce. One of these was denounced in Parliament as "a wicked book," and Milton was named in another action as a violator of the licensing law. The *Areopagitica,* in the form of a speech to the Parliament of England, was his reply.

Far from conveniently ignoring, I specifically cited the very passages quoted by Ms. Baruch when I wrote on Milton and the problem of liberty in the *Antioch Review,* Fall 1953.

But what has all this to do with the issue? Surely the merit of Milton's argument against the feasibility of censorship—the only point on which I invoked his many-faceted essay—can be judged apart from the specific situation that elicited it.

Finally, in speaking for freedom of choice I did not paraphrase Milton; I spoke for myself. Other readers can decide whether Ms. Baruch's description of the 42nd Street viewer (as distinct from the Ivy League viewer?) evidences her respect for human beings and her commitment to human freedom. □

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On Paul Goodman

Editors:

Long-time *Dissent* readers will recall how frequently Paul Goodman's stimulating articles appeared in your publication. Some, such as the first perceptive critique of the J. F. Kennedy administration ("The Devolution of Democracy," *Dissent,* Winter 1962, p. 6), were and remain outstanding pieces. And I have it on the word of one of your editors who frequently dealt with Paul that, despite his major disagreements with *Dissent*'s general orientation, he was a model of generosity, cooperation, and simple human decency in his relations with the magazine.

I am reminded of this by the publication in *Commentary* (February 1978) of an article, "Paul Goodman in Retrospect," by Joseph Epstein. A more tendentious, maliciously unfair study of Goodman would seem impossible. Epstein, particularly upset by the fact that he once praised Goodman, seems determined to undo that slip by sheer venom.

Reconsiderations of authors are a normal aspect of criticism, often fruitful and rewarding. One thinks, for example, of the running series in the *New Republic,* invariably fair-minded. But Epstein evidently has purpose in mind other than reevaluating a writer in terms of his pertinence to new times or a revised place in the history of intellectual ideas or literature. There are no fresh insights about Goodman's work. All that he stresses—Goodman's sexuality, his stylistic shortcomings, etc.—were commented upon in his lifetime. His strength lay elsewhere—the questions he raised, the provocative nature of his replies, the validity of his utopian vision. But to Epstein, Goodman is a corrupter of youth ("the squalor of youthful communalism"), a naive believer in "decentralism," etc. In short, he has done what is best described as a hatchet job.

VICTOR SHRAEGER □

Misunderstandings — All Around . . .

Editors:

Reading Shlomo Avineri's communication, "A Meeting with Saul Bellow" (*Dissent,* Spring 1978), I cannot help feeling that it's a pity Avineri did not raise his objections to Bellow's brief account of their conversation (held in Jerusalem in November 1975) after its first appearance in the July 12, 1976 issue of the *New Yorker* (taking up a half-page in Part One of that long piece). There was an interval of several months before publication of the book, *To Jerusalem and Back,* in which this conversation appears again—and Bellow no doubt would have taken Avineri's objection into account.

Most of all, I find Shlomo Avineri's portrayal of Saul Bellow's views in this account of the conversation unrecognizably simple-minded and hawkish. This, surely, is not how he has elsewhere spoken, or written, of American foreign policy or the problem of Soviet domination (and human rights) in Russia and elsewhere.

It seems that, in this conversation, there have been misunderstandings all around.

EDITH TARCOV
New York City □

McCarthyism in West Germany

Editors:

Milton Mankoff has written two letters to the *New York Times* on the alleged "ban on jobs" in the Federal Republic of Germany, and also, with Monica Jacobs, an article in *Dissent* ("McCarthyism in the [West German] Civil Service," Winter 1978); although to my knowledge he has never shown similar solicitude for the 5,000 political prisoners in the [East] German Democratic Republic, he assures us that West Germany is seething with "a variant of American McCarthyism." It seems that he has not recently visited a German university or read any German papers. There is not one Communist party in West Germany but three, all legally distributing their propaganda and running for office. Recently the workers of the Grundig (electronics) works elected an admitted Communist to represent them on the board of directors. The student representation almost everywhere is dominated by left groups, including Spartacus, the official Moscow affiliate. Even in such conservative places as Freiburg and Munich the halls are covered with antiestablishment posters and announcements of partisan events. During a recent trip I did not encounter anybody who was afraid to voice his opinions, and although professors are all civil servants, I found entire departments, notably in the fields of sociology and Germanistics, in the hands of avowed Marxists, with the curriculum and even the examinations reflecting a Marxist orientation. "McCarthyism," my foot!

But what about that famous "ban on jobs" (*Berufsverbot*)? Although some lecturers whose promotion did not come through may attribute their failure to political discrimination, and the left has made *Berufsverbot* a household word, I should like to inform Mr. Mankoff that there is no law or decree by that name. If one existed, it would be more liberal than the present in some States. For, unfortunately, each of the 11 States handles the

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security check for civil service applicants in its own way—it is liberal where Social Democrats and Free Democrats rule; it is tough in right-wing, Catholic States such as Bavaria and Wuerttemberg-Baden.

What radicals are referring to as *Berufsverbot* is Article 33 of the Constitution, which requires civil servants to defend the Constitution. This article was written—under Allied supervision—with an eye on the sad experience of the Weimar Republic, which had been undermined by disloyal officers and judges. What does this imply? On May 22, 1975, the Constitutional Court ruled, and six months later the Bundestag confirmed, that an applicant for the civil service "must be advised of all adverse information, that he may answer in the presence of his counsel, that a negative decision may be based only on facts that could be brought up in court," and that in case of rejection he has the right to appeal. Moreover, the Bundestag held that "the words and acts of a young person while still a student. . . may be adduced as a reason for rejection only if their nature is so grave as to cast serious doubt on the candidate's ability to uphold the principles of freedom and democracy."

After last year's terrorist acts, rightists have clamored for stricter laws, but the government has refused to panic. The Republic will not abandon its constitutional principles to please 6,000 terrorists and their friends. But it will not be pushed around either, and it must be mindful of the systematic efforts of the East German government to infiltrate its civil service. The police estimates that 17,000 East German agents are operating in West German business concerns, the Administration, political parties, trade unions, police and army. Some have penetrated as far as the Chancellor's office and the Defense Minister's antechamber.

Maybe American readers do not realize a small difference: in this country, a teacher who happens to be a Communist is still an American; by contrast, a West German Communist works for a neighboring government that is hostile to both the Constitution and the existence of the Federal Republic. Nevertheless, CP membership is not considered prima facie evidence of unfitness for a civil-service job; according to a Constitutional Court ruling of 1965, it is to be weighed in conjunction with "the overall behavior of the applicant." On the strength of this ruling, a dismissed teacher sued for reinstatement and was found suitable for another position. Overall, in a period of 18 months, the appropriate authorities handled 450,000 applications; in 5,600 cases "adverse information" was alleged, and of these, 328 applications were rejected for lack of loyalty to the Constitution. This is less than 0.1 percent of the applications, whereas all the left parties that might be considered disloyal together obtained 1 percent of the vote. Considering that these parties find their field of recruitment mostly among students who later apply for civil-service positions, the figures do not indicate a political *Berufsverbot*.

This is not to deny that individual cases of hardship and of arbitrary decisions can be cited—but they are in the courts. Nor will I defend the practice of screening as perpetrated in Mr. Strauss's Bavarian bailiwick. But the difference between these abuses and the McCarthy period is that public opinion, the government and the courts are on the side of those who complain in the name of democracy.

MAX MILLER
New York City □

The Early Fifties — Another Look

Editors:

In the Fall 1977 issue of *Dissent* Peter M. Connolly writes, "To have been a Communist is to have been guilty of something. It is never quite clear what." A partial list of clarifying "somethings" may jog his memory and also suggest that an individual may be guilty without being indictable. To have been a Communist, even in his time frame of the early '50s, was to have been guilty of:

1. Denying, playing down, or even dancing on the graves of millions of helpless corpses (educated guesses range from 10 million to 15 million) done to death by slow starvation and overwork in Soviet concentration camps. It is also to have been guilty of not demanding punishment for those who were responsible.

2. Supporting the most serious and continuous attack ever launched against the intellectual life of Western man. It includes the bastardization of all rules of historical evidence to justify temporary and contradictory policies of a leadership single-mindedly dedicated to maintaining itself in power; the destruction of Soviet literature as a serious occupation, and a similar censorship in the satellites.

3. Supporting a dictatorship over a monolithic political party in the U.S. that relentlessly insisted on blind obedience from its members and hoped to extend its dominion over the rest of the American population—a party that was masquerading as a fighter for the American working class while acting, on every important issue, solely to advance the policies of the Soviet Union.

Such a list could be extended indefinitely, piling documented particular upon documented particular.

Connolly's major thesis is familiar, McCarthy was a bad man, hence everybody he attacked was automatically good. He implies that the genuine Communists picked up by the Wisconsin Senator's sweeps through the government telephone book should have been defended as vigorously as those innocent bystanders recklessly slandered by McCarthy and his henchmen. And he blames the "liberals" for not clamoring to defend the Communists . . . . Does Connolly really believe that those he defends were proponents of 20th-century Americanism? And why does he ignore the hampered

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careers of those who were exposed to the prejudice of the Communists who were in positions of cultural power in the U.S. during the late 1940s, or who used the motion-picture industry, to cite one example, as a vehicle to disseminate their parochial ideas?

Connolly is also disingenuous when he distinguishes between the revisionists who insist that the American Communists were a persecuted minority who alone possessed the key to right political action and the critics on the left who denounced them, and when he proposes a third way, which essentially places the halo of martyrdom on Communists. He writes, "In retrospect, their absolute right to their opinions must be zealously defended by anyone who cares about human rights and does not wish to reserve his compassion for those with whom he identifies." Not having identified with anybody for the past 30 years, I am reluctant to defend the rights of the apologists for the twin brutalitarian regimes of either Hitler or Stalin. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein, "A corpse is a corpse is a corpse," and both the American Nazi party and the American Communists will defend themselves without my help. Presumably, they were both aware that the gun was loaded. After all, even more than a decade before the 1950s, there were those of us who did not need the revelations of a captured Buchenwald or a Solzhenitsyn to know the horrors of Hitler or the bestialities of Stalin.

In the light of history, it is impossible to agree with Connolly's statement, "American citizens have as much right to be Communists as they have to be born-again Baptists." There is no possible equation here, even though the born-again Baptists have outgrown an earlier tolerance of lynching and a tendency to support Prohibition. By this standard, anything goes, yet even the most tolerant must draw the line somewhere. Though Connolly limits his time frame to the early 1950s, thus falling a victim to the current fad for slicing history into salami-sliced segments, those he defends cannot escape the record of the 1930s and 1940s. He defends those who created their own history, raised the slogans of social-fascism, swallowed without noticeable gagging the verdicts of the Moscow trials, the Nazi-Soviet pact, the mutual Nazi-Soviet rape of Poland, and the establishment of Soviet social-imperialism in Eastern and Central Europe. Such Communist actions have deprived hundreds of thousands not only of "their absolute right to their opinions" but often their lives. . . .

Perhaps Connolly is a crypto-revisionist, certainly revisionism is growing popular. On the right, we learn that Hitler was really guiltless. On the left, a belligerent Lillian Hellman and a cutesie-poo Nancy Mitford insist that the Murderers' Row in the Kremlin was worth respect . . . . Such revisionism combines an elitist narcissism with a startled juvenile shriek at being attacked. With the American Communists, it was an article of faith that political brickbats were only legitimately thrown in one direction.

Such revision takes peculiar turns. Recently a young radical acquaintance suggested that it was useless to denounce the Soviet Union while more pressing political issues exist in the United States. Then he began worrying about Vorster. Perhaps our priorities have been confused ever since they were so happily known in the 1930s when the real enemies were Hitler and Franco . . . . Now Connolly tells us that although we may believe (it is not a question of belief but of fact) that "American Communism was a moral and intellectual disaster," we must defend Communists' "absolute right" to their opinions.

GEORGE MANN
Cleveland Heights

PETER CONNOLLY REPLIES:

With the innumerable victims of Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism Mr. Mann feels an intense empathy. It is clear from reading his letter that he sees all Communists in all places at all times as victimizers, that he would view Joseph Stalin and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn as having been members of the same worldwide party of inhumanity. It is therefore natural that he cannot focus on the Communist as a victim, which is what my article was all about. I do not believe that Soviet prisoners were aided by the U.S. government's denial of pensions to wounded Communist veterans or by the cutting off of Social Security payments to the widows of Communist party leaders. I cannot see how the cause of liberty was advanced by the FBI's harassment of terrified schoolteachers who had yellowing copies of the *New Masses* in their attics. Was it a victory for humanity that Abraham Polonsky couldn't direct a film for twenty years? My point was and is that American citizens have a right to be judged by their acts, not by their alleged beliefs or by what the government thinks they might do at some time in the indefinite future. Applying any other standard only opens the door to that totalitarianism which Mr. Mann ostensibly abhors. □

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Beyond the Welfare State Part I

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Henry Pachter

Freedom, Authority, Participation

Motto: "Learn to read and to write so that you may be relieved of labor and become an official with honor. The scribe is a master. His writing pad distinguishes him from the humble oarsman."

—*An Egyptian father to his son, about 1400 B.C.*

Socialism: The Highest Stage of Individualism

Socialism strives to abolish exploitation and inequality. It seeks a society where merit and character are the only marks of distinction; where economic resources are controlled by public agencies, themselves under public scrutiny; where production is geared to the human needs of all and the product is distributed equitably; a society, finally, where man is no longer utilized as a means for purposes alien to him.

In practice, however, socialism has usually come to be identified with "collectivism," and two of its best-known features are public ownership of the means of production and a comprehensive "plan" of production and distribution.

These are indeed characteristic of states that now call themselves "socialist"; but a moment's reflection will show that they are inadequate to define socialism. Nationalization is not socialization, and a plan must have a purpose: it may be designed to enhance the development of man's potentialities or it may be the instrument of national ambitions. The Inca state and Egypt of the Pharaohs featured both public ownership and a plan, but paired with servitude and exploitation. Spartan communism subjected all citizens to equal political oppression. Bismarck nationalized the railroads and the health service; Hitler's war machine was powered by a planned "command economy." Some modern states have adopted a rapid industrialization plan which—though praiseworthy in its intention—ruthlessly subordinates the desires of the citizens to the needs of the state. Others have abolished the market for political reasons without, however, freeing the production units from the tyranny of profit calculations that continue to keep the workers under the yoke of exploitation.

To call all this "socialism" is to misuse a good word. Socialism is not a technocratic scheme designed to run the capitalist economy more efficiently; nor is it an economy that has merely been rid of capitalistic parasites. Socialists hope to emancipate people from serving goals that have been imposed on them either by arbitrary masters or by abstract laws of economic development. They aim to make people responsible for their own destiny and to give everybody a chance to fulfill his or her aspirations as a person. This dream has been expressed in the socialist literature of all times. I shall cite one source that, because it may not be guessed easily, is especially significant:

> In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and antagonisms, we shall have an

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association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

In most anthologies this sentence is the conclusion of the *Communist Manifesto* for it is indeed the end of its theoretical exposition. It must be assumed that Marx and Engels worded this ending with special care, and it is therefore noteworthy that they said "association" instead of "state," and that they did not consider the development of the whole a condition for the development of each, but on the contrary *"the development of each the condition for the development of all."*

I do not consider Marx and Engels oracles, but it is significant that these alleged "collectivists" placed the individual ahead of the collective. True, they proposed to abolish "private property," but not to put state property in its place. Their "association" was supposed to abolish the relationship of property between capital and worker, between dead and living labor; it was to substitute a direct, human relationship of cooperation for the mediated, material relationship of property and profitability.

Socialism has inherited this emancipatory dream from a long tradition of democratic revolutionary thinkers; as is well known, their revolutions were side-tracked and ended in capitalism—with individualism frozen in the property relationship and opportunity confined to the class of owners. Socialism continues the movement of emancipation that was started in the 18th century, and it wants to spread individualism to all, removing the fetters that capitalism has clasped on the fulfillment of many human aspirations. Freedom is not a luxury, to be enjoyed only by the members of a ruling elite, but a basic human aspiration that was brought to flower only in the unique development of Western civilization, and it is still waiting for full and generalized realization: Civil rights and human rights are still expanding, and their wider scope is on the agenda of socialism. *Far from subduing the individual, socialism is the highest stage of individualism—its fruition for all.*

As an association of people, the socialist society certainly must reflect the democratic structure and behavior of its origin—the socialist movement. Readers interested in political theory may have noticed that in the passage I cited Marx and Engels fell into the language of Rousseau, although on other occasions they were highly critical of theories that attribute the founding of the state to a "contract"; but when they wrote the *Manifesto* they still saw the socialist revolution as the direct outgrowth of the democratic revolution. Imbued with the democratic spirit of that revolution, they saw "the association" as the means to mediate between the demands of society and the rights of the individual. They could not conceive of a society (much less a state) that would set itself goals other than those that the citizens themselves had made their own.

But socialism begins with the insight that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The association can envisage goals that unassociated individuals might not even be able to conceive. This is an opportunity as well as a danger. In the following pages, we shall discuss problems that have arisen for socialism out of the conflict between the will of the whole and the will of the parts: how much freedom may smaller associations (the shop, the region, the profession, the ethnic or religious fraternity) reserve vis-à-vis the big association (the nation, an international authority)? How much discipline or obedience can the larger community expect from the smaller and from the individual? When does the public ethos prevail over the private conscience?

The Distributive Economy: A Political Economy

THE SOCIALIST ECONOMY is designed to meet human needs; its production is for use, not for the creation of value. But it cannot claim, realistically, that it will do away with drudgery, will not demand exertions and sacrifices, and will be able to satisfy all demands. It can only promise that burdens and benefits will be shared as evenly as possible. It seeks equality in three areas:

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—equality of opportunity for the self-fulfillment of all;

—equality of citizens' sacrifices and services;

—equality for each citizen of basic rewards (the national dividend).

This does not exclude differences of talent, achievement, and ambition; but it is assumed that some rewards of excellence will be sought in the shape of nonmaterial satisfactions, such as honors and responsible functions, and that material rewards will be held to a token level or taxed so that private accumulation of wealth is confined to tolerable limits.

Private enterprise, such as small businesses and family farms, are not incompatible with an economy whose big industries, utilities, and financial services are nationalized, and which also encourages cooperative enterprise. What matters is that big investment decisions and overall industry targets are controlled by public boards. In the light of experience it can be said that the extent and speed of the early nationalizations in Soviet Russia and those in Eastern Europe after World War II were politically motivated and economically unwise, and that some reprivatization has paid off in Eastern Europe without endangering the regimes.

At a certain level of technological development, the minimum that is guaranteed to all citizens can be large enough to reduce inequality to marginal amounts (to name an arbitrary proportion—the permissible maximum income could be twice as large as the median and four times as large as the minimum). Since basic needs are guaranteed to all, it will be the choice of each individual whether he or she wishes to work longer, acquire special skills, develop new lines of personal fulfillment. The border between work and play should become blurred. In a socialist society nobody should be called a parasite because he chooses to write poetry rather than advertising copy. Each citizen should have the free choice of occupation after he has delivered the minimum service that all are required to supply.

Unfortunately, Marx called this requirement "labor service," and Hitler gave the same name to his premilitary training corps. It goes without saying that we, by contrast, have in mind those unpopular but necessary jobs that cannot be filled by special incentives in an economy of abundance (say, street cleaning, digging ditches, mining), and which could not be made a required stage in career training (as working as nurse's aid could be for medical students). This public service could be limited to, say, two years but it should be obligatory for all able-bodied citizens. There might be a choice of the age at which one fulfills this obligation, and also a choice between kinds of service. But it should be admitted that these will be jobs that must be filled after the reservoir of generous, public-spirited volunteers has been exhausted.

Conscription of labor can be held to a minimum if a system of incentives is available to those who engage in a career. At some point the government may have to choose between increasing the incentives, lowering the minimum sustenance, and increasing the years of required service. Obviously, abundance is always relative, and no utopia can elude unforeseen problems. Marx did not know about erosion and pollution, and he took the threatening exhaustion of natural resources all too lightly. The neo-Malthusian Club of Rome builds its utopia on the premise of scarcity, or even impending famine. Against this kind of panic reaction, Marx's prediction was correct for 100 years: population movement and the rate of inventions did adjust to the capabilities of a given economic system. But from now on we must husband and plan our resources so that the threat of scarcity may no longer be used as an excuse for inequality. "Relative abundance" means that we now have the technical means to control the factors that used to produce relative scarcity: we can control the growth of population; we can speed and plan the development of resources; we can direct investment in new technology so as to meet the true requirements; we can reduce the enormous waste of resources that occurs under capitalism.

Contrary to widespread misconceptions, socialism may not open up a period of

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unrivaled development. It may broaden consumption but provide no incentives to produce bigger cars and more sophisticated household equipment. A planned economy may postpone the use of an invention that might be marginally useful but would require excessive resources and unwarranted social costs. By contrast, it might develop industries that are not profitable today but would provide intangible benefits to the community. (This is, of course, not utopian; states and municipalities have always built parks, sewers, harbors, waterways, roads, etc.—certainly to help business but also to make the environment more livable for all; partial public planning has always been a necessary complement to "free" enterprise, which will not provide services deemed essential by the community.)

Competitive and unnecessary expansion and a run-away rate of growth are illusionary benefits. A rapid rate of investment reduces the resources available to consumers and strengthens the arguments of scarcity, that the rate of surplus value must be increased, management given more authority, and there is not enough to allow equal rations for all. A socialist economy is not subject to the whiplash of competition to expand production for the sake of profit, and it does not have to make work for the unemployed. It will distribute as much as possible of the national dividend and will allow improvements and innovations only where they benefit the consumers or save labor and resources. It will take into account environmental and social costs. It may spend more on safety measures and health protection, or on machines that do not save labor but reduce drudgery and discomfort. (Again, to some extent this is achieved today through union activity: if a bulldozer operator is given an air-conditioned cabin, the marginal decrease in his discomfort may not be matched by increased productivity.)

These conditions require a different notion of efficiency than exists today. (I should like to refer here to two earlier essays I wrote for *Dissent*: "The Right to be Lazy" and "Three Economic Models," now in the books *Voices of Dissent* and *The Radical Papers*.) The socialist plant manager need not strive for maximum profit, nor seek the most "cost-effective" means. He may measure his performance—in a certain way similar to the old guild craftsman or the artist—by aesthetic criteria, sanitary standards, satisfaction of the workers with their work, environmental impact of his operations, but not necessarily by the quantity of output and the efficiency of his use of the equipment. He may not need to earn the amortization of invested capital; he may be able to reduce labor time instead of dismissing workers or seeking additional outlets.

Obviously, I do not claim that a socialist economy will not make mistakes; the question is, what would be the consequences of these errors? Misinvestments in a capitalist economy lead to depression; a socialist economy can write off the losses and shift production; it can localize mistakes and smooth out fluctuations. Technological shifts, population movements, even fashion changes can produce problems very similar to those that occur in capitalist economies; but a socialist government need not take these catastrophes as God-given laws of nature against which man is powerless. It is equipped to deal with social change, and the structure of the socialist economy is so designed that it will absorb unforeseen irregularities.

To Control the Controllers

SOME HINTS must be given on the structure of the socialist economy. Underdeveloped countries will rely largely on a central plan to develop their industries, but it should be kept in mind that in so doing, they also depend on the population's ability to produce needed articles in their family, or to do without them. Even more advanced countries, such as the Soviet Union, have had crash programs rather than an integrated plan; they merely called "plan" the speedy development of certain key industries while they failed to provide satisfaction to their consumers. In Eastern Europe, planning has usually meant the development of heavy industry, at great

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cost to workers' well-being, and utter chaos in regard to consumer satisfaction. These models, which have given a bad name to socialism, are not the poorly managed samples of a basically sound structure, but are monstrosities in their very conception.

A socialist economy must be so designed that its functioning depends not on the vigilance of a government department but on self-adjusting mechanisms, steady feedback, and corrective action. Modern socialist theory has found that a certain freedom of the consumer markets and the price mechanism is an aid to flexible responses while an authoritatively imposed plan may lead to gross disregard of consumer needs. In the Soviet Union managers frequently have no incentive to follow demand, and hence merely fulfill the quantitative "plan target"—with the consequence that for a month people can buy only gloves of one size. Under "market socialism" consumers would have a choice of goods.

In a capitalist society, cartels, on the other hand, may serve as a tool to organize a market, or the government may act as buyer of last resort to set prices and production goals. A socialist government can use similar mechanisms for different purposes: not to maintain high prices but to regulate production in accordance with needs. The techniques of guiding the markets have been worked out by the corporate economy and the relevant government departments, regulatory agencies, and international authorities (European Coal and Steel Community, Common Market Farm program, etc.); we need not discuss them here, because new techniques that a socialist government might add to these will not make a substantial difference. But the purpose of these controls should be different.

I see the following possibilities:

- control is largely in the hands of corporate managers who are in close contact with the regulatory bureaucracy;
- control is imposed by the bureaucracy that dominates the industrial managers by political means, for instance, a strong dictatorship;
- control is exercised by democratic institutions through a bureaucracy (an unstable setup that may easily be transformed into either of the preceding types);
- control is exercised through democratic movements directly at every level of production and distribution.

The problem is to institutionalize democratic types of control and organization in such a way that the new institutions cannot set themselves up as governing elites or merge with them. And this problem is compounded by the need to adjudicate the conflicts that are likely to arise among industries, regions, control agencies, and between workers and management, planners and consumers, surplus producers and subsidized areas, etc. The complex apparatus of a modern industrialized economy cannot be ruled by administrative fiat, and the courts are unable to resolve conflicts that arise out of social change.

Inevitably, therefore, economic questions will have to be thrashed out in the political arena, and this can only be done in a democratic way. A dictatorship may surpass conflicts for some time, but will experience undesirable reactions (black markets forcing the state to become more tyrannical; economic deformities creating pressures in other areas, etc.). A better way would be to let conflicts come out into the open and to stress the associative features of the socialist-democratic processes: by developing cooperation and codetermination, letting the governed participate in decision-making, allowing a proliferation of committees and representative bodies. Such a multiplication of participatory bodies may have its negative and even unpleasant or dangerous aspects. I shall deal with them later. At this point I should like to emphasize that the only other alternative is some form of corporate, bureaucratic or state capitalism. Liberal capitalism was characterized by the total separation of the state from the economy; 20th-century economy, by whatever name, is characterized by its thorough politicization,

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and under democratic socialism economic decisions would be political, too.

Democracy: A Prerequisite of Socialism

WIDEST PARTICIPATION of the governed in the processes of decision-making is desirable not only on all levels of economic activity but also in schools, municipal affairs, all organizations of public interest. According to David Spitz democracy has "two ingredients. . . . the free play of opinions [and] the constitutional responsibility of the rulers to the ruled," and Robert MacIver calls it "a way to determine who shall govern and, broadly, to what ends." These seem to be merely *formal* determinations that say nothing about the economic system and which class is to rule. Yet, as democracy increasingly becomes majority rule, it will tend to pervade more and more areas of public life; it will develop a policy on education, family life, and health protection, on workers' rights and, above all, on overall economic policies. The purely "formal" or procedural features of the democratic process are converted into substantive measures, and democratic government comes to be defined (by Aristotle, who hated it for that very reason) as a government that serves the interest of the majority. It still is hated for the same reasons: it will impose minimum wages and maximum hours, health protection and medical insurance, social security, the dole, death taxes, regulations of business, environmental protection, codetermination and grievance procedures, as well as civil rights and integration. None of these measures is socialist in itself; together they not only impose elements of a distributive economy on an acquisitive system; they are also launching pads for further demands, and they support the movement for a more comprehensive change of the system. This is why socialists of the last century embraced democracy so fervently. They were confident that a majority of the people would act as a government for the people, breaking down the formal separation of the state from the social life of the country. In contrast to the liberal-republican state, the democratic state is not a limited state; it is porous to the influences that come from the community, and it is allied with socialism by unbreakable ties.

This is certainly true as long as socialism has not been totally victorious, and even during this period socialists will not rely exclusively on parliamentary institutions but have to pursue their goals through active, ever-renewed movements to counter the capitalistic-oligarchic influences on the liberal-representative state. (It is a mistake, of course, to reject those institutions because they give access to the levers of power all too impartially to the rich and to the poor; the answer is to find means of making the system work for the majority; for all alternative systems are worse.)

Quite a different problem arises when socialists obtain a majority and come into a position to impose their own system, i.e., create irreversible changes that might infringe on the rights of minorities. From Plato to Hegel and his latter-day disciples, political theorists have maintained that the state should represent not the interest of the majority but that of the whole, or "the general will." In defense of democracy Rousseau put forward the sophistry that the elector does not vote his interest but what he thinks the majority will guess to be the general will. Khrushchev, when asked why there were no free elections in the Soviet Union, snapped back: "What if the people vote wrong?" The argument hinges on the assumption that someone (the philosopher, the dictator, the party) knows what is the interest of the whole. Most parties also claim that what they represent is not really a particular interest but "the best interests of all" or everybody's interest "if rightly understood." This presumably entitles them to disregard the minority, or even to prevent it from ever becoming a majority again. To state the argument in this form is almost tantamount to destroying it. Some writers influenced by the Frankfurt School have given it an even sharper, I mean to say more ludicrous, form. It seems to them that under socialism people will undergo a fundamental change of

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character; not being alienated, they will have neither different interests nor different opinions, but will gladly cooperate in any reasonable assignment that the government decides upon. The government, *a fortiori,* would be possessed of infinite good will and wisdom, and therefore the people would have no need for democratic organs of control.

No one has the right to make such assumptions. Under socialism governments will continue to blunder and people will continue to want to control them and commit their own blunders. As Rosa Luxemburg was fond of saying, "The wisdom of the wisest Central Committee cannot be a substitute for the experience people gain by making their own mistakes." I find it strange that socialist philosophers should expect a total psychological change and then not trust the "new man" to take part in decision-making. If socialism is to develop a social dynamism, it will need all the collaboration and self-criticism, all the participation in the selection of leaders and in the formulation of programs it can get. In the long run, the health of the socialist system will depend on the amount of "self-activation" or "self-movement"—words Marx and Luxemburg repeated again and again. This means free discussion, free expression, free access to the means of criticism and to the media, the right to question yesterday's truth and correct yesterday's mistakes, the freedom to assemble, organize, and petition, the right to choose representatives and to form parties—even the right to refuse cooperation (to strike).

Fortunately, we don't have to choose between welfare and freedom, democracy and socialism. But if I did have to choose, I would accept inequality under a democratic government rather than a despotic government offering equality. For under democracy I could fight for more equality, while despotism would inevitably bring back inequality. The leader who claims to represent the general will is most dangerous; he carries aggression abroad and oppression at home. For socialists it is better to claim that they represent nothing more than the will of the majority (if they do), and democracy means to carry out that will.

This leaves me with the question I slurred over a moment ago—what justification does the majority have when it passes over the will of the minority to impose structural changes? The problem has been put most succinctly by John Stuart Mill, in *On Liberty*:

> The "people" who exercise the power are not the same people over whom it is exercised; the self-government spoken of is not the government of each by himself but of each by all the rest.

We have a number of conventions by which we abide because they are practical and their observance does not impinge upon either our individual rights or the system we have accepted. But consider abortion: if the right to have an abortion implies the right to have it in a public clinic (as I believe it does)—by what right do I campaign for a law that would force Catholics to contribute, through their tax payments, to acts their religion forbids? As F. A. Hayek has pointed out, the notion of law has moved in recent times from rules of conduct, mostly restrictive, to substantive commands, mostly counterdiscriminatory. To create equal opportunity for all indeed means to write laws that affect different groups differently. Advocates of affirmative action have hammered this lesson home, and there is no reason to believe that a socialist community may not discover problems requiring similarly discriminatory laws, be it that the majority becomes persuaded of a need for remedial action or that minorities form log-rolling coalitions. But whatever the mechanics of forming a majority, there is no virtue in blinking the fact that its will overrides the will of the minority.

A gracious or guilt-ridden majority might grant certain dissenters conscientious objector status. I could, for instance, be persuaded to give Catholics a tax remission for services, such as school and abortion, which they do not require. Conflicts of this sort can be resolved by appropriate accommodations within the prevailing system, and I shall adopt for this type of conflicts the name Mao Tse-tung has given them—nonantagonistic or within-system conflict. The other type of conflict, obviously, is of a nature that cannot be

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resolved within the system. (By "system" we mean an interconnected set of institutions, each functioning to permit all others to function properly.) To introduce a socialist economy means to create institutions that would be difficult to repeal. It means to create a situation where those advocating repeal cannot easily be accommodated. To impose majority will in order to introduce sweeping measures of socialization, therefore, places considerable responsibility on that majority. To appreciate this we have to examine more closely what is meant by revolution.

Political and Social Revolutions

REVOLUTION is usually thought of as a single political act accomplished in a relatively short time, sharply separating two different systems or epochs. Thus, for most people capitalism in Russia ended in November 1917, and socialism began shortly thereafter. Even those who would see a period of transition might be surprised to learn that as late as in 1921 Lenin wrote: "We have elements of a capitalist economy, of state capitalism, of socialism, and of a cooperative economy in our country." Likewise, 1789 is seen as a watershed, even though Tocqueville showed how much of the ancien régime survived and how much of the new age it had anticipated.

The need to dramatize, to symbolize and periodicize is satisfied when a new age is proclaimed, and the proclamation helps people feel that indeed they owe allegiance to the new age. This stabilizes the revolutionary regime and relieves it of the need to justify itself again and again. Thus, the dismantling of the soviets after Kronstadt and the NEP, Stalin's crimes and the pact with Hitler, the imperialist policies since World War II—all this is seen, not as so many steps away from socialism but as means to fortify its power in the U.S.S.R. *L'esprit de système* prevents the cool analysis of each action on its merits; one gives the system the benefit of every doubt and does not ask whether perhaps its behavior indicates a change in its nature.

Revolution is a powerful symbol; it reassures the revolutionary government that it can be dislodged only by counter-revolution; that it can dismiss unsympathetic teachers, officers, civil servants, judges who may have tenure; that it can swiftly create new offices and institutions to supersede the old; that it can take emergency measures to paralyze its enemies; that it may stay in power for more than one election period. Even if a socialist government did emerge nonviolently from ordinary election processes, it must fear a coup or foreign intervention; after the Kapp Putsch in Germany nearly overthrew the Republic, the Austrian Socialists adopted a program envisaging a defensive dictatorship against reactionary plotters. We also have seen that hostile powers are able to create conditions similar to civil war, which eventually seem to justify intervention by the armed forces against a lawfully elected government (Spain 1936, Chile 1973). The 1978 threat of a Socialist-Communist government in France paralyzed the capital market, and graver consequences might have ensued in case of that coalition's victory. For all these reasons it is necessary to make the following distinctions:

- As long as socialists are a minority or only a weak majority they can press for reforms, may join governments committed to reforms, but are not in a position to introduce fundamental changes in the social-economic system.
- Even where socialists and their allies may have won slight majorities, they must try to avoid the impression of revolutionary inroads but should quietly strengthen their positions in all democratic institutions, increase the pressure of mass organizations, and then, having proved that they can govern, ask for a clear mandate for major structural changes.
- If socialists and their allies have reason to foresee a substantial majority for a program of large-scale structural reforms, their campaign may assume the symbolism of revolution. It is vital to tell the voters the truth, for introducing socialism behind their backs would only entail a prolonged dictatorship. (I think it is now time for socialists to speak frankly about Allende's mistakes; though he

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remains a martyr, he need not be a model. Allende came to power without a clear mandate, either in numbers or by force of his program; he allowed supporters whom he could not contain to carry the revolution into the countryside before he could obtain its consent, thus uniting his enemies. While recognition of such mistakes will in no way excuse the counterrevolutionary, fascist repression that followed, it must be asked whether the bloody coup would have been possible if the Chilean socialists had refrained from "revolutionary" gestures. After all, this happened in a country that had enjoyed democratic government for 40 years and had the experience of the antisocialist coup of 1932.)

- Where there is no tradition of democratic government and socialists come to power in the wake of civil war against a dictatorial or colonial regime, the chances for immediate transition to a left-wing dictatorship are greater, but a heavy price has to be paid. (Castro has done much that is admirable in Cuba; but he is dependent on Soviet aid, had to allow massive emigration, keeps up to 30,000 dissidents in prisonlike institutions, has not dared to face an election and has been unable to create a socialist political structure.)

IF a revolution is to legitimate a socialist government, it must respond to the deeply felt desire of the population; no idea, be it ever so pure and convincing, can be a substitute for the democratic expression of consent that makes it unnecessary for the revolution to suppress dissenters. We come here to a fundamental distinction that used to be taken for granted in the older socialist literature but became blurred in the minds of our contemporaries because of the brilliant imagery of the political revolutions in Russia 1917, China 1949, and Cuba 1959, all based more or less explicitly on the model of the Great French Revolution of 1789. The alternative to this Jacobin-Bolshevist scenario was spelled out by Karl Kautsky in his 1902 pamphlet *The Social Revolution*. Kautsky distinguished the social from the *political* revolution, which in his time meant the establishment of majority rule. This, he explained, was half the battle; after it, there would follow a period of intensified class struggles, in the course of which the working class would expand its power in all areas: press, business, politics, the judiciary, the school, the theater, etc. Foreseeing fascism, he warned that reactionary gangs would try to turn the clock back by force. To meet them the working class would need state power, but that would be only one episode in a long-drawn-out process.

Today we may amplify these insights by our better knowledge of the process of revolution. Even in the Great French Revolution the political events did not reflect the deep social upheaval that shook French society. But the classes that were most active in pushing the revolution on to its consummation were not the ones that finally substituted themselves for the ancien régime. We call it the "bourgeois revolution" because of its outcome, but "the third estate" was much larger than the bourgeoisie, and even at the height of the terror the masses were not in power. Likewise in the Russian revolution, the seizure of power by a Marxist party was not tantamount to a proletarian revolution. Lenin had foreseen only a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the "hegemony" of workers and peasants. But under the pressure of circumstances—the unique opportunity of the physical disappearance of the ruling class and the total collapse of the economy—the political revolution ran far ahead of the possibilities for a socialist revolution in Russia. The Bolsheviks had to retreat from War Communism when the radical impetus of 1917 was exhausted and was followed by a period of stabilization. Trotsky later wondered "whether we did not introduce Thermidor ourselves."

The Russian revolution led to the nationalization of most enterprises, and this model has been followed throughout Eastern Europe. In the West nationalizations have been more selective, and some are still on the agenda. The Russian and East European revolutions have also made the society of these countries more egalitarian and have given the workers security and welfare from

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the cradle to the grave. But they did not abolish exploitation, did not promote self-administration, did not increase productivity beyond the rate that was to be expected through technological advances, and have left the working population woefully behind their Western colleagues with respect to both income and supply, not to speak of freedom and happiness.

If the social revolution was to improve the living conditions of working families, the slow, undramatic advances in the West have added up to more than the leap in the East. The price Western workers have paid for their greater freedom is the see-saw battle of class war, the pressure to succeed, the lack of security. The democratic process has resulted in permanent improvements and institutions, confirmed (and often expanded) even by right-wing governments that had originally opposed them. But the system is enormously wasteful and frustrating; its redeeming feature is that the defects are clearly seen and openly discussed.

Comparing the two systems, one feels entitled to ask: Was it necessary to go through the painful process of revolution and to submit to bloody dictatorships only to end with a working class lagging behind those that had not made a proletarian revolution? Is it necessary to mobilize the symbolism of revolution in order to give the working classes of the West the assurance that the system works for them? To the first question Robert Heilbroner has answered: What about the suffering that is prevented by a revolution (the unborn children, or simply what Marx describes in the first volume of *Das Kapital*)? It seems to me more fruitful to deal with historical questions as history: in some countries, we have seen, the social revolution was accelerated by a political revolution that also established a certain type of state, the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party. Because of this accident of history, the socialist revolution has come to be identified with such a seizure of political power.

Marx coined the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat," but he always meant it in a sociological sense, and he envisaged it for only a brief period. Moreover, it was to be the dictatorship not of a party but of the organs of socialist democracy opposed to the old state apparatus. Originally, Lenin and Trotsky also thought of the Soviet dictatorship as an organ of popular democracy. Only later, when this was narrowed down to the dictatorship of the Politbureau, was the myth of the salvationist dictatorship created. Instead of seeing the need for dictatorship as a misfortune, Bolshevik propaganda had to insist that it was a virtue. This historical accident had grave ideological consequences. The dictatorship now was passed off as the model for all other revolutions, the vision of the social revolution became confused with the myth of the seizure of power.

Dictatorship and Progress

WHERE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES have not produced an enterprising middle class, the task of modernization depends on the new elites: army officers, urban intellectuals, civil servants, and classless students trained abroad. None of these classes has economic power of its own, but they all hope to use state power as the vehicle of their aspirations: to develop the country's resources and to prepare it for the race with other countries. For both purposes, they offer elite leadership, for progress can no longer be left to the spontaneous processes of undirected growth.

Where no tradition of democracy exists, technocrats and bureaucrats are seen as pioneers of progress. The great pre-revolutionary historian Vasili Klyuchevsky thought that in Russia the state had always been ahead of society in promoting development; in fact only the West has been modernized by spontaneous social forces rather than by the will of the princes.

The state elites are more acutely aware of the dynamics of power than of the human desires of the awakening nation. The more urgent the need for speedy development and the more compelling the thrust for national power, the less will the leaders feel inclined to develop democracy. Nationalism is their justification, with socialism added on as an

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ideology, and both identified with their own usurpation of power.

Modernizing nationalism in some countries goes by the name of "socialism," but in others, as in Taiwan now and in Japan before World War II, under the name of a corporate economy. Historical parallels are also relevant here: despotic governments helped the development of capitalism; kings gave commercial privileges to their courtiers, established royal manufactures, sent the poor to workhouses, and drove the peasants off their meager holdings—under pretext of making them more efficient, in the name of national power, and for the sake of higher economic rationality. This system was called mercantilism, and its greatest contemporary representative is the Shah of Iran.

Some friends of the Third World have argued that underdeveloped countries cannot hope to make adequate progress while remaining democratic. This was the ideology of Indira Gandhi; she was brought down by antimodernizing forces. This is no reason to acclaim every dictatorship as progressive or to accept its claim of being "socialist." So far dictatorships have not raised the living standards in their countries, and when the time comes that technological and financial infusions achieve an expansion of their national product, then it will also be time for vigorous democratic and labor organizations to fight for a share in decision-making and its results.

In a milder form, the argument for dictatorship points to the huge and powerful bureaucracy that is needed to cope with all the tasks of a socialist economy. Usually one hears this argument from the enemies of socialism, and socialists tend to minimize its seriousness. Nevertheless, there are two sides to this problem.

Bureaucracy as a Tool of Socialism

SOCIALISM HAS two uses for bureaucracy. In the age of welfare reforms, government agencies are set up to control the anarchy of the markets, shield the environment and protect people from exploitation, and curb the rapacity of business. No wonder bureaucracy has a bad press in capitalist countries. Only recently, the rejection by Congress of the proposed Consumer Agency was greeted as "a blow against overweening bureaucracy."

Second, bureaucracy may accomplish what private enterprise fails to provide or may provide it better (how wonderful are European railroads); it also is a necessary agent of public services.

In addition, bureaucracy may develop programs and points of view that grow out of its assigned routine but point toward new possibilities—projects that may lead beyond the welfare purposes, or even critical views of existing policies and institutions. It is well known that Marx used British government reports in writing *Das Kapital*, and to this day practically all information on capitalistic malfunctions are based on official surveys, reports, investigations—it could not be different. In the West, moreover, the close association of academic, corporate, and government research keeps the society "open," and agencies of the establishment (e.g., the CIA in the Vietnam war) sometimes oppose adventurous policies that the government and the public have embraced. More important, their job may lead them to look beyond the present system and to project policies requiring a more rational economy. Any public official who has to think about the future of energy supply must become impatient with the influence of the oil companies.

Fear of *1984*, of *The Bureaucratization of the World,* of the "technocentric society" is based on the perception that these technocrats, who see the need for a centrally directed economy, may also want to use their strategic position—society's need of their skills in commanding functions—to seize power and make themselves the dominant class. However, the men with ideas usually are not the doers, and the so-called power elite is divided into at least three different strata:

—the experts: scientists, technologists, officers, professionals;

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—the bureaucrats: administrators, corporate directors, civil servants;

—the politicians: the party or military junta, the parliamentary parties.

A complicating factor is that members of the elite groups may be employed by the government, the academy, private industry, and that, as C. Wright Mills has claimed, these elites tend to merge into what Eisenhower has called the industrial-military (and I would add: -academic) complex. But for our purposes, it is preferable to divide the new class into two large groups:

—the political avant-garde, the movers in government and business;

—the bureaucracy proper, the civil service and corporate managers.

Whereas the first is flexible and dynamic, and derives its legitimation from the claim that it represents the people, the second has the "civil service mentality" of honesty, obedience, predictability, and sluggishness. These are ideal types, and one must be careful not to compare the vices of one group with the virtues of the other. Usually, business claims the dynamism for itself and blames dullness on "the bureaucrats"; but there are as many bureaucrats working in business as in government, and for all the talk of oppressive, immovable bureaucracy, the loudest complaints are heard when a dynamic bureaucracy tries to move an inflexible business corporation. An excess of bureaucratic virtues may be harmful, even oppressive, and if decision-making is left to the bureaucracy, the system may become self-serving and unresponsive to the needs of the community. But let us not forget that part of the clumsiness of bureaucratic procedures is due to the safeguards against abuse. The danger that the administrative and technical bureaucracy will set itself up as the new masters is comparatively small—to do that the bureaucrats would need the leadership of a political elite. (After the death of Stalin, Beria found out that a modern country like Russia cannot be governed by the police, and Malenkov that it cannot be governed by the economic and administrative bureaucracy. It took a politician like Khrushchev to organize power, and when he turned against the party, he was ousted too.) The bureaucracy will usually serve the system in which it works, but it does not create a system. It does not produce a political will, but is the organ of a will. The Great Wall of China was not built because labor became available but because the tyrannical will of Shih Huang-ti made it available. The computer does not produce solutions for problems that have not been fed into it.

This analysis disagrees with the theories of Saint-Simon, Bell, Djilas, Orwell, Burnham, Wittfogel, Brzezinski and Birnbaum who all assume that somehow a managerial bureaucracy, a "technocentric structure" or "new class" emerges from the pores of our society—as the capitalist class developed in the interstices of the ancien régime. The antisocialists among them then will push the analogy further: just as the popular revolution of 1789 ended by bringing that capitalist class to power, so the socialist revolution of our time will end, or has ended in some countries where it was tried, by bringing the technocrats and bureaucrats to power. But Stalin was not merely the "top bureaucrat," and the Communist bureaucrats are not an exploitative class in the same sense as were capitalists and feudal lords. In the nonrevolutionary advances of Western socialism, by contrast, each wave of social legislation leaves, like a sediment, a bureaucracy that implements and institutionalizes it.

These bureaucracies tend to stabilize and perpetuate the new social relations. Their very mulishness will prevent reactionary forces from reversing the trend, and socialists depend very much on the self-preserving instincts of bureaucracy to protect social progress from political attacks. Harold Laski was merely witty but not profound when he said that experts should be on tap, not on top; in practice the technocentric structure is as much an ally of the labor movement as an impediment to stronger dynamism. Also,as Orlando Patterson remarks in his outstanding

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Ethnic Chauvinism, "a big impersonal state may be a better guardian of libertarian values than a small unit with its cronyism."

Although the various strata of the ruling class interchange functions and recruitment, they also are rivals. Dutch sociologists have invented the term *verzoiling* (roughly: column-building) for the process of splitting society into professional camps: the corporate structure, the administrative structure, the military structure, the medical structure, the academic structure, the judiciary, the political structure, each with its top layer of a dominating elite. I find this model not only more persuasive than the myth of the technostructure; it is also more practical. Rather than call upon the whole of society against "big brother," democrats could suggest two remedies against his domination: encouraging mobility within each column and rivalry between the columns. In each of the "columns" we find politicians who articulate the technical plans that come from their respective bureaucracies. The latter determine only feasibility, maybe desirability. It is for the political leaders to choose, to bargain among different interests, to hammer out a balance that can then be presented as the "general will."

Pluralism

SOCIALISTS ATTEMPT to expand the jurisdiction of public bodies and to institutionalize their material achievements. Eventually a point is reached where the haphazard, historical gains must be consolidated and systematized—if only to prevent them from getting into each other's bailiwicks. Then a grave decision will have to be approached: a new economic constitution must be codified, and it will tend either toward state capitalism and eventually fascism, or toward democratic socialism. The latter presupposes strong independent mass organizations and established traditions of constitutional government. Strongly centralized, overarching organs of decision-making will favor state capitalism; fragmentation of power will serve the interests of democracy. This includes the customary division of power among executive, legislative and judiciary, between federal and regional, but also between planning agencies and claimant groups, between economic and political authorities, employing agencies and producers, etc.

The term "totalitarian" suggests the monolithic identity of the various elites and conceals the fact that oppression is first of all political. Stalin called upon the "people" to help purge the bureaucrats and especially those who had developed some appreciation of the limitations of their power or maybe even a certain affection for the people under their jurisdiction. So did Mussolini, so did Hitler. Generals whose advice was professional had to go. As long as only bureaucrats rule, they will be "corrupt," i.e., responsive to the parameters of their jobs. What is dictatorial and tyrannical is the General Will. Bureaucracy is a check upon it, and the more so the less it is itself a monolith. It must be fragmented to reflect the plurality of interests and functions in a modern society—differences of class, region, race, philosophy, profession. Anchored in its various "columns" it cannot become an autonomous machinery of oppression. The divergent groups and antagonisms can act upon the system.

This hope of rivalry has been translated into a political theory called "pluralism." It does not mean direct participation of the governed in the process of government, but it gives the representatives of interest groups access to the levers of decision-making. It guarantees a certain diversity of impulses that are brought to bear upon the decision-making process, and to that extent is a safeguard against arbitrary government. How well this device will work obviously depends on the vigor and number of independent articulate forces in the society. Once again, it becomes clear how merely "formal" requirements can be translated into substantive measures.

Self-Government and Participation

SELF GOVERNMENT means actual participation of the governed in the process of decision-making and in the design of measures to carry

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out those decisions. It can be realized only if the governed have access to all levels of government. For this purpose, a number of devices and designs rival for attention. I can here only give a brief run-down, and refer to other articles for details.

- The Councils: a revolutionary organization that became an executive organ in the Russian revolution, and then also the model for movements in Europe. It was prominent in the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and in the German revolution of 1918. It means direct participation on the lower echelons but indirect participation through delegates on the higher levels.
- The syndicalist system: shops are run cooperatively by the trade unions and are free to compete, though investment decisions may be made centrally. This system was used in the Spanish Civil War and in parts of Israel. A combination of the council and the syndicalist systems has been used in Yugoslavia.
- Codetermination: the system remains capitalist or state capitalist, but workers' representatives are elected to sit on the board of directors. The system, operative in Germany, and partly in France and other areas of the Common Market, involves shop stewards and trade unions in questions of management, gives them access to the books and a strong voice in personnel questions and, where public officials also sit on the board, the chance to form majorities.
- Sweden's "Meidner Plan," under which control of each company would gradually pass into the employees' hands.
- Capitalistic variations of the codetermination scheme, for instance the VW-model where workers own shares in small denominations, or the Sears Roebuck plan, where the employees' pension fund owns the shares.
- The public corporation model, preferred in England, where control is in the hands of an authority or public board. (I leave out "capitalism without capitalists"—such national enterprises as Amtrak.)

Characteristic of all codetermination schemes and also the Yugoslav form of the council scheme is: participation on the lowest, most direct level, the shop. It also leaves the plan bureaucrats in control of the industry and fails to reflect other concerns of the masses—as consumers, as members of a church, etc.; it gives them little access to the formulation of policy on the national level. The large figures of "participation" that are often cited for Yugoslavia thus reflect only a rather truncated democracy. Moreover, these councils are split locally. A real workers' representation requires an independent national union. Real professional and industry representation requires national chambers of the various professions, farm associations, etc. In Yugoslavia these have neither political nor economic power. The Weimar Constitution foresaw a National Economic Chamber, which however never acquired real power.

I reluctantly conclude that the councils are more likely to become the instruments of a strong political leadership, transmission belts between the national government and the shop, rather than true organs of democratic control. They could be that only if they were to develop their own political organ that would feed information to independent parties and trade unions. There is no substitute, no gimmick, organization, or scheme of participation that can or should take the place of political parties.

It must also be admitted that the democratic system of economic self-administration that exists in Yugoslavia has not diminished the dictatorship of the party; nor has it prevented the growth of a sprawling bureaucracy on the county, regional, and national levels, whose in-fighting is a burden to the country. Moreover, the syndicalist and participatory schemes offer little protection against parochialism, industry egoism and communal rivalry. (Nor should we be oblivious of recent examples in the U.S. where even Paul Goodman, our most ardent advocate of local self-government, called on the central New York school board to assert its authority.)

The most serious enemy of self-government, however, is apathy and in-

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difference; it not only strikes all theories of spontaneity and participation with paralysis; it also makes participatory schemes the playground of sectarians and fanatics. The fatigue of drawn-out committee meetings or disgust with factionalism all too easily leave the field to a determined group, which takes over and makes a mockery out of the best schemes. Nor should this problem be shrugged off with assertions that under socialism people will be different. Dedication and spontaneity come in bursts, or at best waves, and there is no guarantee that only the capable and well-intentioned will constitute themselves as the permanent avant-garde.

Participatory experience on the local and factory level, therefore, is welcome as a recruiting school for the trade union and party activities; it is a contributing factor to decentralization, but it should not be used as a pretext for withholding the essential political and ideological freedom.

The Continued Relevance of Class War

MY CONCEPTION of democratic socialism is as far from revisionism as from utopian visions of a world without problems and conflict. I do not recommend any specific set of institutions, organization schemes, or election procedures. I am concerned with the involvement of the greatest number of people in the management of their destiny on all levels of economic, cultural, and political decision-making. Whether they do this in the form of a council movement, in the form of trade unions or cooperatives, or in parliamentary forms, success will always depend on the amount of interest and action they put into the organ of self-administration. No government or party can place self-administration on a platter and hand it to the people by decree; they must develop it by their own efforts and ingenuity. Not only that, they must continue to develop them even after they have been institutionalized. For every human institution can become obsolete, rigid, perverted, alienated from its original intentions.

The East European examples, which seem to contradict the possibility of democratic socialism, should not deter us; they are based on the experience of countries that never or rarely had enjoyed democratic institutions and citizens' rights. In the Western nations, we have a long tradition of independent judges, an independent press, the freedom of the universities, or undiminished rights of assembly and of parliamentary representation. The continued presence of opposition parties, of alternatives and of constitutional guarantees will assure that, no matter under which social-economic system, the further evolution toward greater freedom will not be permanently abridged.

Democracy is movement of people, constant struggle to enlarge their rights and to bring more of them into the peer group. This will not be achieved without their own participation and without pressures, even fighting. The aim of socialism, of course, is to make further frictions as tolerable as possible, to achieve a consensus that is not imposed from above but agreed to by the interested parties. But if the society is not stagnant, new claimant groups might appear or new problems of adjustment might be discovered. The mere fact that material worries have been removed may bring psychological and family troubles to the fore. Recent experience even indicates that such problems may lead to asocial, antagonistic behavior. Precisely because I don't expect paradise to break out, I must be prepared to allow conflict, movement, evolution, even revolution. Not all conflict may be susceptible to litigation. Political outlets must be available for those who, rightly or wrongly, do not feel that their aspirations can be fulfilled within the existing institutions.

In all the so-called socialist countries revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary action may be required to overthrow the oppressive political dictatorship. This revolution will be supported by a large part of the technical intelligentsia, which sees both the material possibilities and its own ambitions curbed by the dictatorship. In the underdeveloped countries popular revolutions are less likely to succeed; they may topple one kind of

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dictatorship only to fall prey to another. Or else they may have to pay for freedom by readmitting alien capitalism (which may be good for development but is not tolerated gladly in the present climate of opinion).

In most of the Western countries we now have a system that combines representative government and civic freedom with welfare-state institutions—partly nationalized industries, guidance and manipulation or direct controls, public services, redistribution of income through taxation and services, but, on the whole, still criteria of profitability for economic activity. Trade unions and consumer organizations confront corporate power; civil-rights claimants, farmers, and church groups fight for influence. Reformist action by labor parties and governments has reached limits where further major progress can be made only by measures that seem to "go beyond the welfare state," notably: overall planning of social welfare, distribution of a national dividend, preponderance of public enterprises whose rationale is not profitability. Further reforms would be "structural," i.e., instead of alleviating the condition of individuals they would change the way the system operates.

What prevents the adoption of these measures is not political oppression but their inherent risk, the absence of organizations that have a clear and popular plan and are ready to fight for it. New ventures are introduced piecemeal, and often without the clear awareness that their full benefits could become visible only in a totally different context.

Here we come once more to the problems of "system"; socialism today does not confront the capitalist model with a utopian model. It is not a predesigned plan that can only be accepted or rejected in toto. On the contrary, it is an open development of the economy based on an equally open movement for the betterment of living conditions. It is a movement, more and more, of all the people and not only the laboring classes. The new possibilities of the welfare state have brought to the fore problems that previously had been hidden by the need of fighting first for material satisfactions. Socialism has become (again, as in Marx's own time) a cultural movement striving not only for the improvement of material conditions but for the emancipation of the individual personality. It certainly is not a movement of technocrats for a more efficient organization of society. It is a movement of people, and its idea cannot be divorced from their eternal yearning for freedom. □

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Robert A. Dahl

On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States

What this nation can become will be influenced, though not fully determined, by the ways in which we think about ourselves as people. With a people as with a person, it is a sign of wisdom and maturity to understand and accept limits that are imposed by nature's laws and the scarcity of resources, whether physical, human, or political. In this sense we Americans may at last be entering into our maturity. But to accept as real the limits that are imposed only by our own minds is not wisdom but self-inflicted blindness.

Out of our past we have inherited ways of thinking about ourselves that condemn us to try too much and accomplish too little. We fail not so much because our aspirations are too high but because they conflict; and within ourselves, too, we are conflicted in ways we do not fully recognize. In this sense our consciousness, both individual and collective, distorts our understanding of ourselves and our possibilities.

An important part of this distortion comes out of a series of historical commitments this country has made. It might free our consciousness for greater political creativity if we were to see those commitments more clearly, to understand better how they conflict with one another, and to choose self-consciously rather than blindly among our possible futures.

The expression "historical commitment" may carry misleading connotations. A historical commitment in the context of this article is nothing neat, tidy, wholly self-conscious, broadly understood, much less agreed to by all, nor a well-shaped historical drama with a clear beginning, a middle, and an end. Rather, it pertains to periods in our history in which some alternative possibilities seemed open to the principal historical actors who, however, were in conflict over the relative desirability of the alternatives they perceived. The conflict among them became overt, bitter, sometimes prolonged, and in one way or another finally came to involve a substantial number of citizens. In time, however, one set of advocates won out. Thereafter, the issues so fiercely contested ceased to be salient in American political life. What had recently been a sharply contested possibility thus came to be accepted as pretty much an undebatable aspect of the status quo by the major parties, political leaders, writers and publicists, and (so far as these things can be discerned) the voters themselves. If dissenters continued to fight rearguard actions, they were few in number and on the margins of American politics, public attention, and political acceptability. Thus the historic commitments soon came to possess all the extraordinary advantages of things as they are and, after a generation or so, as they seem always to have been. This article will focus on five historical commitments this country has made to goals that are in some respects incompatible and will condemn us to a confused sense of national purpose unless and until we recognize these conflicts and decide on our priorities.

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Five American Commitments

THE FIRST commitment was the one this country made to a liberal political and constitutional order that gave primacy to the protection of certain political and civil rights among its citizens. Although the whole colonial period was crucial to the development of sentiment favoring that commitment, the most active stage might be conveniently if rather arbitrarily placed somewhere between 1776 and 1800 or thereabouts. Sometime not long after 1800, conflict over the validity of the existing Constitution pretty much recedes and soon hardly an American voice is heard in opposition to it. So profound is its acceptance, in fact, that the great constitutional quarrels to follow were not so much over the validity of the Constitution as over its meaning, assuming its unquestioned validity.

• The second historical commitment, consolidated somewhere between 1800 and 1836 or thereabouts, was to the belief that the only proper constitutional and political system for Americans is a democracy. Although democracy mainly meant adhering to democratic procedures in the operation of the government, it also carried with it notions of a larger society within which social and economic conditions would favor the high degree of political, social, and economic equality necessary to democracy. By extraordinary luck, such a social order already existed in the United States. This was an agrarian society where, in an economy predominantly of family farms, the adult white male citizens lived with fewer social, economic, and political inequalities than any large number of persons in history that had existed up to this time, and very likely since. Tocqueville was not the first observer nor would he be the last, though he may have been the most gifted, to see how marvelously the agrarian society fostered a condition of equality among the citizens, or rather among the white males.

Yet that agrarian order was not only a historical rarity, but it had no future. During the harsh struggles over the new socioeconomic order that was to replace it, Americans who wished to retain the old order were the most numerous, persistent, and politically successful opponents of the new. But even with the whole weight of tradition on their side, they and their occasional allies were unable to prevent the displacement of the old agrarian order by a new order based on commercial and industrial capitalism, in which the ideal engine of economic production and growth was no longer to be the privately owned family farm but the privately owned commercial, financial, or industrial corporation. The contest that eventuated in the triumph of the new order over the old dominated American political life through the last three decades of the 19th century. During this time a number of alternatives to the new order—agrarianism, anarchism, socialism, individually owned consumers' and producers' cooperatives, selective government ownership and operation, economic regulation, limits on corporate size, monetary schemes, enforced competition, and many others—were thrust forward, debated, and finally pretty much defeated. The election of 1896 might be taken as the turning point in the victory of the new order over its rivals.

• Thereafter, the national commitment to the socioeconomic order of corporate capitalism swelled into a current so powerful that opponents could make no headway against it and were swept out of the mainstream of American life. Even socialists, who in Britain and Europe gained greater support as industrial capitalism expanded, remained a small and largely uninfluential minority in the United States.

If by 1900 or so this country was committed to corporate capitalism, aspects of the new order nonetheless remained at issue. Widespread hardships were engendered by an economy with as little public control as the dominant political coalition demanded. These hardships were real enough to ensure a following for a politician who advocated reform—at any rate so long as he did not

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attack the basic commitment to private ownership, whereupon his following would shrink into the futilities of minor party politics. Thus if socialism was unpopular, reform was not. As a result, from time to time regulatory laws won out in particular states and occasionally, as with Wilson's New Freedom, even in the federal government. But the country's commitment to only a modest interference by government in the conduct of corporate capitalism was more accurately reflected by the administrations of McKinley, Taft, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, and by Theodore Roosevelt's bombastic style and ineffectual policies—speak loudly but carry a small stick—than by the brief interlude of reform during Wilson's first term. As we all know, it took the trauma of the Great Depression finally to convert a hitherto oppositional minority into a majority coalition.

• The product of this coalition was the fourth historic commitment, which was, of course, to the idea and institutions of a welfare state. The prior commitment to private ownership and control of economic enterprises, and thus to corporate capitalism, was mainly upheld. Yet some of the most acute hardships and injustices generated in the socioeconomic order were to be removed or alleviated by government actions—mainly by the federal government. Orthodox as this commitment now seems, one who did not live through that period may find it difficult to recapture how intense, bitter, and at times violent was the conflict over the inauguration of a welfare state by Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. However, as with the preceding commitments, the main elements of this one soon gained such wide acceptability that opposition to the commitment itself, as distinguished from criticism of specific means, came to be an exercise in political futility.

• Even before the main battles of the New Deal were finished, conflict had begun over what was to be the fifth historic commitment. This was the commitment to play an international role as a world power. Again, it may be hard to recapture how bitterly divided Americans were over this issue in the late 1930s. Yet the advocates of an American role as an active world power were riding an overpowering current of events that swept along most of their opponents and swamped the rest or left the few survivors stranded far behind the main body of American opinion.

All five of these historic commitments remain strong. Even after the shame and disaster of Vietnam, there is not really much likelihood of our renouncing our position as a world power, though the way we use our position and power cannot possibly be to everyone's liking or, alas, to everyone's benefit, and could easily be as harmful to ourselves and others once again as it has been in the recent past. Within limits, the strength of each of the five commitments seems to wax and wane; one is eroded here and another grows firmer there. But the commitments still dominate the way we think about ourselves and our future. And that is a source of difficulty, for the commitments are in some ways incompatible.

Impediments to Democracy

CERTAIN IMPEDIMENTS to the realization of democracy in the United States have resulted from the other historic commitments. We can begin with the Constitution itself, the political system it helped to form, and the political ideas and beliefs embedded in and strengthened by the constitutional and political system. As we have seen, this country's commitment to democracy came after and not before the formation and adoption of the Constitution. Even as late as the Constitutional Convention, the desirability of a representative democracy was a debatable issue. Consequently, the framers could not and did not agree to establish a representative democracy. They could and did agree to establish a representative republic with a framework of government that would, as they believed, rest on popular consent and yet ensure as best they knew how the preservation of certain basic rights to life, liberty, and property that they held to be morally inalienable. In this sense, the framers were liberals and

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republicans though they were not democrats; they intended to establish a liberal framework of government, though it could be, and later was, democratized to a degree that, for a time, would astonish the world.

The political system the framers helped bring into existence was in at least two major respects defective by democratic criteria. First, in spite of the eloquent universality of the language used in the Declaration of Independence and common at the time, in actuality the framers gave much narrower scope to the principles of consent and political equality. Without seriously qualifying, much less abandoning their universal norms, they nonetheless created a government that would demand obedience to its laws from a majority of adults—women, nonwhites, and some white males—who were excluded from active participation in making those laws, whether directly or through their elected representatives. The majority of adults were thus provided with as little opportunity to give their active consent to the laws that they were bound to obey as their colonial predecessors had enjoyed under laws enacted by the English Parliament.

Second, in order to achieve their goal of preserving a set of inalienable rights superior to the majority principle—a goal many of us would surely share—the framers deliberately created a framework of government that was carefully designed to impede and even prevent the operation of majority rule. Thus, when the country committed itself to their framework of government, two different arguments became confounded in the national consciousness, and they remain confounded to this day. There is the liberal argument that certain rights are so fundamental to the attainment of human goals, needs, interests, and fulfillment that governments must never be allowed to derogate from them. But in addition there is the American constitutional argument that the highly specific, indeed unique, set of political arrangements embodied in our constitutional and political practices is necessary to preserve these rights. While I accept the liberal argument, the American constitutional argument seems to me seriously defective.

Now the matter of what ought to constitute inalienable rights beyond the reach of any government and the proper relationship between such rights and democratic procedures are questions far too complex to examine here. Certainly the solutions are not easy to come by, either theoretically or practically. Moreover, we might agree on the need to preserve fundamental rights against government without necessarily agreeing on what these rights should be. The point is, however, that the elaborate system of checks and balances, separation of powers, constitutional federalism, and other institutional arrangements influenced by these structures and the constitutional views they reflect are both adverse to the majority principle, and in that sense to democracy, and yet arbitrary and unfair in the protection they give to rights. However laudable their ends, in their means the framers were guilty of overkill. As only one example, the presidential veto has generally been used for purposes no loftier than simply to prevent the adoption of policies disliked by the president and the political coalition whose interests he seeks to advance. It is not as if a president uses the veto only when a majority coalition threatens the inalienable rights of a minority. What is typically at stake is purely a disagreement about policy. Insofar as all policies have costs and gains and thus influence the distribution of advantages and disadvantages, the policies of a majority (like those of a minority) are likely to be adverse to the interests of some persons; but we can hardly say—nor can the framers have intended to say—that every privilege that happens to exist does so by inalienable right.

Yet there is this strong bias against majorities in the political system the framers helped to create. Because they succeeded in designing a system that makes it easier for privileged minorities to prevent changes they dislike than for majorities to bring about the changes they want, it is strongly tilted in favor of the status quo and against reform. In their

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effort to protect basic rights, what the framers did in effect was to hand out extra chips in the game of politics to people who are already advantaged, while they handicapped the disadvantaged who would like to change the status quo. From a moral perspective, the consequences seem arbitrary and quite lacking in a principled justification.

We ought to be able to design a way of preserving fundamental rights that is not so biased in favor of existing privilege and against reform. A number of other countries that place fewer barriers in the way of majority rule than exist under our political system manage to preserve at least as high a standard of political liberty, with less procedural unfairness. But of course to bring about such changes meets precisely the obstacle to change just mentioned, the antimajoritarian bias of the constitutional and political system.

This brings us to another consequence of the framers' antimajoritarian design that is unsatisfactory both as a protection for morally inalienable rights and as a device for procedural democracy. It may not be going too far to say that although the framers were unable to prevent the democratization of the constitutional system, they created a potentially lethal instrument for that democratization in the presidency. When the democratic commitment referred to earlier was undertaken, the antimajoritarian constitutional design was not merely preserved but identified with democratic government itself, a confusion that remains all but universal among Americans, as visitors from other democratic countries and teachers of political science to American undergraduates repeatedly discover. However, democratizing the Constitution required a transformation that some of the framers had feared and had sought to prevent. The claim was now made that the president was the sole authentic spokesman for and representative of national majorities. Indeed, the constitutional framework hardly provided any other possibility. Given the nature of the Senate and even of the House, the claim on behalf of the presidency was plausible, and one that the defenders of Congress found hard to rebut. In the long run, as we know, Congress failed to uphold its claim, and the claims made on behalf of the presidency pretty much won out. Endowed with legitimacy deriving both from constitutional interpretation and democratic ideology, the presidency became the institutional center from which a majority coalition, if there was to be one at all, would be mobilized, organized, and given voice. Thus one consequence of the framers' institutional design was to channel the process of democratizing the Constitution into transforming the presidency, a process that was not to end, if it has yet ended, before that office became what lately has been variously called an elective monarchy, an imperial presidency, a plebiscitary chief executive, and other epithets still harsher.

The irony is, then, that the first and second historic commitments taken in their entirety endow us with a political system in which any majority coalition supporting changes adverse to existing privileges is likely to succeed only if the presidency has access to a concentration of political resources great enough to make the office a standing danger to majority rule and procedural democracy itself. Thus the justifiable effort to strengthen the majority principle in a constitutional system that was designed to impede it has led not to democratization of the Constitution but rather to the pseudodemocratization of the presidency.

Under the agrarian economic order, the pseudodemocratization of the presidency did not matter very much nor would it have gone very far. The white males who comprised the demos enjoyed an astounding degree of autonomy in relation to one another and to all governments. Their political resources, and the opportunities and incentives for using them should the need arise, were vast in comparison with the weak coercive means available to any of the American governments. Hence, the potentiality of widespread governmental coercion of the demos or any substantial part of it was perhaps as minimal as it had ever been anywhere among a numerous body of people.

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As for the members of the excluded majority, their very exclusion from political rights meant that they could not successfully appeal to the government to prevent private or public coercion, unless they happened to have the support of a majority of white males, and not necessarily even then if a substantial minority in the demos opposed the change sought by or in behalf of the disfranchised. In practice, then, the excluded groups had little protection against oppression.

The third historic commitment was to change the distribution of resources so favorable to the demos. An agrarian order that historically speaking was extraordinarily congenial to democracy was now displaced by a new socioeconomic order of corporate capitalism that was much less compatible. The basis of the new order was a fundamentally different kind of economic enterprise. The small family-owned and -operated farm that was modal if not universal in the agrarian order was now displaced by one of the most radical innovations that mankind has ever invented for economic organization, control, and growth. This was the privately owned and operated business corporation. Through a highly successful case of ideological transfer, the Lockean defense of private property, which in the agrarian order made good sense morally and politically, was shifted over intact to corporate enterprise. This ideological triumph successfully warded off attacks not only from nascent socialist movements opposed to private property in the means of production but also from the historical rear guard defending the old agrarian order, which had at hand no convincing way of distinguishing private ownership and control of one kind of enterprise, the farm, from private ownership and control of a radically different kind, the business corporation. Thus by an extraordinary ideological sleight of hand, the corporation took on the legitimacy of the farmer's home, tools, and land, and what he produced out of his land, labor, ingenuity, anguish, planning, forbearance, sacrifice, risk, and hope. The upshot was that the quite exceptional degree of autonomy the farmer members of the demos had enjoyed under the old order, an autonomy vis-à-vis both government and one another, was now granted to the corporation.

Two consequences of this new order were particularly adverse to democracy. First, the new order generated much greater differences than the old in political resources, skills, and incentives within the demos itself. The degree of social and economic differentiation that had already been foreshadowed in the cities of the Eastern Seaboard was no longer marginal, as it had been when the socioeconomic order was overwhelmingly agrarian, but central to the new order. Great differences in wealth, income, social esteem, education, occupational skills, and ethnic status now differentiated wage-earners and pieceworkers in industry, ship, mine, and forest—a rising proportion of whom were immigrants—from the middling strata of white-collar and professional people, who for some time to come were predominantly Anglo-American in origins, and these in turn from the opulent few. Because differences like these are readily convertible into political resources, the wide if by no means perfectly equal dispersion of political resources among the demos in the agrarian order was now considerably more concentrated. Inequalities in political resources added further to the handicaps of any majority coalition that sought changes in the allocation of privileges and disadvantages.

Second, because the internal government of the corporation was not itself democratic but hierarchical and often despotic, the rapid expansion of this revolutionary form of economic enterprise meant that an increasing proportion of the demos would live out their working lives, and most of their daily existence, not within a democratic system but instead within a hierarchical structure of subordination. To this extent, democracy was necessarily marginal to the actual political system in which the members of the demos lived their daily lives. Thus, the transfer of the Lockean view to the corporation was a double triumph. By making ownership the only, or at

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least primary, source of legitimate control over corporate decisions, the new order not only excluded democratic controls in the internal government of the enterprise but placed powerful ideological barriers against the imposition of external controls by a government that, for all its deficiencies, was much more democratic than were the governments of business firms.

The fourth and fifth commitments extended the domain of hierarchy even further. To be sure, from the New Deal onward the commitment to a welfare state helped to reduce the autonomy of economic enterprises. By protecting the rights of workers to join unions and bargain collectively with employers, the New Deal helped to democratize some aspect of some enterprises for some employees. By regulatory devices of various kinds it also reduced the autonomy and thus the arbitrary and sometimes despotic power of the rulers of economic enterprises. However, if the commitment to a welfare state has altered, it has not profoundly reduced the two adverse consequences of the corporate capitalist order mentioned a moment ago. The evidence seems to show that what appear to be great changes in levels of taxation and transfer payments have not much reduced the inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income and thus the relative political advantage or disadvantage associated, at least loosely, with access to these resources. And except for the limited effects of trade unions among a minority segment of the labor force, the American commitment to a welfare state has not done much to alter the hierarchical structures of corporate government under which so many Americans live.

The commitment to a welfare state in fact has added even more burdens to democracy. For one thing, the reforms undertaken in behalf of the commitment could not be carried through without the leadership of an energetic president, who could increase, organize, and exploit all the political resources of the office. If we want to find the recent rather than the Jacksonian origins of the imperial presidency, as good a place as anywhere to begin is the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. Among other things, what his presidency did was to disarm most intellectuals and academics, not least political scientists, who, being mostly in favor of reform, enthusiastically came forward with whatever was needed in the way of a justification for enhanced presidential power. Moreover, in order to achieve its gains, the welfare state needed extensive governmental bureaucracies. Even if these are never fully controlled by official hierarchies or, for that matter, by anyone else, they do provide an ambitious president with very considerable political resources—far beyond anything the framers ever dreamed of—for persuasion, inducement, manipulation, and coercion. By now this proposition needs no documentation beyond what Watergate has furnished us. Finally, like the governments of corporate enterprise, the bureaucracies in the government of the state are also hierarchical in structure. Far from diminishing hierarchy, therefore, even in the course of regulating economic enterprise the welfare state has multiplied the number, domain, and scope of hierarchies in American life.

The fifth commitment, of course, compounded these consequences adverse to democracy. As an active world power, the country had need—at first quite suddenly—of a large military establishment, thus still another hierarchy, even more rigidly hierarchical than the rest, one perhaps even more difficult to control, yet available to the president for executing foreign and military policies that could be, as events were to show, the arbitrary and personal expressions of a chief executive whose decisions on these matters were for all practical purposes beyond the control of Congress, the courts, or the demos. In a further irony, constitutional language and interpretation had left a substantial gap in the framers' imposing array of checks and balances. Successive presidents plunged through and widened this gap. By action and inaction, the Congress, the courts, and the demos—cheered on, it has to be said, by political scientists, historians, lawyers, and other intellectual spokesmen who should have known better—all gave their blessing to the

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emerging imperial presidency. It took national shame, disaster, scandal, and prolonged investigation to make us realize what sort of institution the presidency had become.

To understand these changes in the presidency it is important to keep in mind that for the better part of two generations this country was involved in war, near-war, war crisis, or cold war. Three decades of war would be enough, one might think, to undermine a weaker republic. Perhaps we should consider ourselves lucky that our first two commitments held as well as they did. Even so, as a world power things were done and widely thought to be justified that surely would have been condemned as unjustifiable in less paranoid circumstances. An obsession with national security and loyalty fostered secrecy in government, the enormous expansion of domestic spying, the harassment of radicals, and other excrescences. And even if some important reforms were carried out, mainly with respect to civil rights, these decades were on the whole unfavorable to reform, and certainly to any changes that might seem to question the validity of our historic commitments.

The Doctrine of Procedural Democracy

IF WE WERE now to search for a perspective on our potentialities as a people that would not be distorted either by self-glorification or self-hatred, that recognized our capacities for great evil, great good, and plain mediocrity, and discerned in the conflicting commitments of our past that weigh heavily on our present some criteria of excellence against which to measure our achievements in the future, where would we begin?

We might begin near the beginning, with our first two commitments. Ignoring for a moment the contradictions described earlier, these may be interpreted as an aspiration toward a society with a political system in which liberty, equality, and justice would jointly prosper, a society therefore requiring also a socioeconomic system that would foster these ends by supporting the kind of polity necessary to them. Thus interpreted, these two commitments would give priority to political ends over economic ends, to liberty, equality, and justice over efficiency, prosperity, and growth, a priority that the commitment to corporate capitalism reversed both in ideology and in practice, and that has remained reversed down to our own day.

The guiding criteria against which to measure political performance implied by this interpretation are, in my view, the criteria of procedural democracy, which, together with their most crucial assumptions, constitute what one might call the doctrine of procedural democracy. What follows is a very brief and incomplete account of that doctrine.

To become fully operative with respect to any association, the doctrine of procedural democracy presupposes a judgment that at least two conditions exist among some set of persons who constitute or intend to constitute an association.

First, there is a *need for collective decisions* that are binding on the members of the association. This set of persons is confronted by a matter that would be disadvantageous to leave entirely to individual action or to choices made exclusively through a market, and comparatively advantageous to make collectively and enforce on the members.

Second, among the persons obligated to abide by collective decisions on this matter, there is a subset, the *demos*, whose members are *roughly equally qualified, taken all around.* That is, no member of this qualified subset, or demos, believes that any other member of the association or any subset of persons different from the demos is significantly more qualified than the demos to arrive at a correct choice with respect to matters requiring collective decisions. Under the *maximal* interpretation, the members believe that the demos includes all qualified members of the association and all members of the demos are in all relevant characteristics equally qualified with respect to matters requiring collective decisions. Under the *minimal* interpretation, no members of the association are in any relevant characteristic so clearly more qualified as to justify their making the decision for all the others on the matter at hand.

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A government of any association in which these conditions are judged to exist is, on these matters, a *putatively democratic government in relation to its demos.* Thus a judgment that these conditions exist implies a rejection of claims that might be advanced on behalf of a government over the demos on these matters by a putative aristocracy, meritocracy, or governing elite.

The doctrine of procedural democracy holds that for any putatively democratic government, collective decision-making by the demos should satisfy at least three criteria:

> *1. The criterion of* political equality. *The decision rule for determining outcomes must equally take into account the preferences of each member of the demos as to the outcome. To reject this criterion is to deny the condition of roughly equal qualification, taken all around. This criterion implies that the procedures and performance of any putatively democratic government ought to be evaluated according to the extent to which the preferences of every member of the demos are given weight in collective decisions, particularly on matters members think are important to them.*

> *2. The criterion of* effective participation. *In order for the preferences of each member of the demos to be equally taken into account, every member must have equal opportunities for expressing preferences, and the grounds for them, throughout the process of collective decision-making. This criterion implies, then, that any putatively democratic government ought to be evaluated according to the opportunities it provides for, or the costs it imposes on, expression and participation by the demos.*

> *3. The criterion of* enlightened understanding. *In order to express preferences accurately, each member of the demos ought to have adequate and equal opportunities for discovering and validating, in the time available, what his or her preferences are on the matter to be decided. This criterion thus implies that any putatively democratic government ought to be evaluated according to the opportunities it furnishes for the acquisition of knowledge of ends and means, of oneself and other selves, by the demos.*

ANY government that satisfies these criteria, and only such a government, is *procedurally democratic in relation to its demos.*

As the doctrine is interpreted here, the demos defines itself. This is one of the most tricky and difficult aspects of democratic theory and practice. Because the demos defines itself, it need not include all the members of the association who are obliged to obey its rules. Whenever this is so, some members of the association, who are excluded from the demos, will also be excluded from the rights, opportunities, and protections of procedural democracy. Probably no association that has ever attempted to constitute a government for a state has admitted children into the demos. Now if children are excluded from the demos because they are judged to be unqualified, and yet are subject to the laws, then of course they are governed without their consent. Yet few of us would argue that the interests of children, inadequately as they are often protected, would be served better if they were made full voting members of the demos. To protect the rights, needs, and interests of children, we must rely not on procedural democracy but on the strength of adult feelings toward children of love, nurturance, pity, joy, compassion, and hope, and on laws and practices that these feelings may foster.

It is a very different matter with adults, among whom these feelings are ordinarily much too weak to ensure adequate protection for those who may be excluded from the demos. Consequently, we need to make explicit in the doctrine a proposition that has often been omitted or obscured. To do so requires a fourth criterion, that of *inclusiveness:* the demos ought to include all adults who are obliged to obey the rules of the association. Because the demos is inclusive, the criteria of procedural democracy apply to all the adults. Any government that satisfies all four criteria might be called a *full procedural democracy.*

One further point: probably no one who believes that full procedural democracy is a relevant aspiration thinks that it must hold for all matters, including judgments on highly technical, judicial, and administrative matters

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of every kind. Rhetorical assertions that seem to make procedural democracy the only proper method of making decisions have again and again been shown to be illusory and self-defeating. Yet as with the problem of inclusion, there is an exceptionally tricky problem here, one that can be dealt with only summarily in this article by stipulating a fifth criterion, that of *final control by the demos* ("popular sovereignty"). That is, the scope, domain, and procedures for making decisions other than by full procedural democracy are subject to decisions made by full procedural democracy. An association that satisfies all five criteria might thus be called a *fully democratic association in the procedural sense.*

Before turning to the implications of this doctrine for the United States, let us consider several objections. It is often said that procedural justice, and thus procedural democracy, will not guarantee substantive justice. This is true. It is said further, however, that as a consequence substantive justice should take priority over procedural justice and therefore over procedural democracy. This is partly right but mainly wrong. It is partly right because procedures should be judged by the ends they serve. Procedures that do not tend toward good ends cannot be judged good procedures. But the criticism is mainly wrong in implying that other solutions, particularly solutions that accept the claims of a putative governing elite, are more likely to lead to substantive justice. This is rarely a better short-run solution and practically always worse in the longer run. Finally, it is said that procedural democracy is in any case too anemic in its standards to compel us toward the robust aspirations of our nobler selves, for it speaks only to process and thus says nothing about the content of a good society. This criticism is only partly right in its premise and thoroughly wrong in its conclusion. It is obvious that all societies, including our own, fall very far short of satisfying the criteria of procedural democracy. If we in this country are to reduce the gap between criteria and performance in a large way, we shall have to make changes of great moment. What is more, these changes will have the effect of satisfying many of the claims for substantive justice as well. Such claims as could remain would constitute the very essence of healthy controversy—controversies that are properly adjudicated by means of procedural democracy and not by yielding to the claims of a putative governing elite or allowing a minority to impose its views on a majority.

Needs and Prospects

SUPPOSE WE WERE to interpret our first two historic commitments, taken together and, after eliminating the inconsistencies as a commitment to procedural democracy. Suppose further that we were to test our commitments against the requirements of this doctrine. Suppose, finally, that we resolved to move toward procedural democracy by reducing obstacles to it, at any rate up to some limit at which the trade-offs in other values became excessive. Given these suppositions, what changes would we make? Of course, not everyone accepts these suppositions; and even if they did, we might disagree about the answers. We might disagree both because the location of the limit at which trade-offs become excessive cannot be satisfactorily described in a precise way, and also because different persons will evaluate the trade-offs differently and thus reach different judgments about the location of the limit.

Nonetheless, it is possible to specify some directions in which changes are needed. At the outset these require changes in the way we think about ourselves and our institutions.

Consider the liberal thrust of the first historic commitment, to the preservation of morally inalienable rights. Such rights are assumed to be beyond the reach of government, and superior to any claims to other rights that conflict with them. But it has never been clear what rights are to be understood as inalienable or primary, and what rights are secondary and alienable, and hence must yield when they conflict with primary rights. The difficulty is that the grounds are not at all clear on which the distinction between primary and secondary, or inalienable and

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alienable rights, is to be made and justified.

Yet the conditions and criteria contained in the doctrine of procedural democracy are very rich in their implications for rights. For example, any judgment that the conditions for a putatively democratic government exist among some set of persons asserts a right to a government that satisfies the criteria of procedural democracy. Obviously, an assertion never establishes the validity of a claim. As with other rights, there is no automatic, self-enforcing determination of the validity of a claim. Judgments have to be made, and among a large number of people such judgments will rarely be unanimous. Claims may be rejected, justly or unjustly. Rights asserted usually have to be fought for.

Consider claims advanced on behalf of adults excluded from the demos that they are qualified to participate in American political life. The whole burden of American experience demonstrates not only that any group of adults excluded from the demos will be lethally weakened in its own defense, but also that those who govern will fail to protect the rights, needs, and interests of the excluded group. There is no convincing evidence in American history for the existence of one group of adults qualified to rule over adults who are excluded from full citizenship in the demos.

Yet for 200 years after the lovely universalistic phrases of the Declaration, the wellsprings of American national life were poisoned by the denial of claims to full citizenship, and by the injustice and oppression this denial entailed. To reject these claims, as American policy and practice did, was in effect to deny that full procedural democracy ought to exist in the United States. If we are now on, or past, the threshold at which claims are finally accepted as valid, then we are also obliged to accept the criteria of procedural democracy as valid measures of our national performance.

These criteria imply the existence of a body of primary rights, the rights necessary, though not sufficient, if a people is to govern itself. It could be readily shown that this body of primary rights must include most, though not all, of the rights and liberties the Supreme Court has held to be protected by the Constitution. As long as the primary rights necessary to procedural democracy exist, then all political rights exist that are necessary if a people is to govern itself. Surely, no narrower definition of inalienable rights ought to be acceptable to us. At the same time, however, any broader definition that includes rights inconsistent with these primary rights ought not to be acceptable to us. For to claim a right inconsistent with the primary rights necessary to procedural democracy is to deny the validity of procedural democracy and thus the capacity and right of a people to govern itself. If doctrine and practice were to treat these primary rights as inalienable, then all claims to rights inconsistent with these primary rights would be subject to final determination by the ordinary processes of collective decision-making, and thus by voters, representatives, and legislators. To hold otherwise would be to deny that, taken all around, citizens are roughly equally qualified to make judgments on matters involving secondary rights. But since practically any public policy will infringe upon someone's existing privileges and thus give rise to a claim that a right has been diminished, if citizens are held to be incompetent on all matters involving secondary rights, what matters are they qualified to decide?

Viewed in this light, the commitment to corporate capitalism needs to be reconsidered. Earlier, when the framers had discussed their fears about majorities that might invade the rights of minorities, more often than not they mentioned rights to property. Their reasoned justification of a right to property, if they held one, would no doubt have been Lockean. Yet the Lockean justification of property makes no sense, it was suggested earlier, when it is applied to the large modern business corporation. It is absurd to regard as inalienable one's right to buy and thereafter own shares in ITT, and it approaches the ridiculous to argue that because one owns shares in ITT one possesses

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an inalienable and exclusive, if in practice quite useless, right to choose the directors of the firm, and that the primary legal obligation of the directors and management is, by a legal extension of the original doctrine, to protect the interests of owners above those of any other claimants.

If we abandon the absurdities in extending Locke on private property to ownership or control of the modern business corporation, then the rights of owners must be seen as secondary in relation to the primary rights that are necessary to self-government.

If ownership and control of corporate enterprise are matters of secondary not primary right, then the mere assertion of a right to private property does not provide a rational justification for private ownership of a large economic enterprise. If privately owned enterprise can be justified at all, it must be on the grounds of comparative social effectiveness: that is, of all the possible alternatives, this form provides the greatest social advantage with least social disadvantage. The only question we need to ask, then, is whether a privately owned corporation is more effective in achieving our social purposes, including procedural democracy, than all the possible alternatives to it.

In this perspective, any large economic enterprise is in principle a public enterprise. It exists not by private right but only to meet social goals. Questions about these social goals, and the comparative advantages and disadvantages of different forms, are properly in the public domain, matters for public discussion, choice, and decision, to be determined collectively by processes that satisfy the criteria of procedural democracy.

To be sure, none of this implies a direct answer to the question of how a large enterprise should be organized, controlled, or owned. To arrive at a correct answer depends as much on technical as on philosophical or ideological judgments, and perhaps a good deal more. Although this assertion contradicts a nearly universal dogma held on all sides, it is readily demonstrable by even the briefest consideration of the range of alternatives. If we were to take into account only the most obvious possibilities with respect to the internal government of enterprises, external controls, markets, prices, and the locus of ownership together with the rights and obligations of owners, we would quickly arrive at a very large array of theoretically possible combinations. Few of these can be dismissed a priori as unsuitable. Probably none can be shown to be superior to all others in all circumstances. Consequently what has already become standard practice in advanced countries in this century will, one hopes, be taken for granted by citizens in advanced societies in the 21st century: a complex society cannot protect the rights, needs, and interests of its people with one single, prevailing form of economic organization but requires instead a network of enterprises organized in many different combinations of internal government, external controls, and ownership.

In choosing among the large number of possible combinations available in any particular instance, however, citizens of a country committed to procedural democracy would obviously want to avoid consequences adverse to procedural democracy. I suggested earlier that this country's commitment to corporate capitalism resulted in at least two such adverse consequences. As to those resulting from the unequal distribution of political resources, a country committed to procedural democracy must either place effective limits on the extent to which economic resources can be converted into political resources, or else ensure that economic resources are much more equally distributed than they are in the United States at present. So far we have tried only the first; that approach has largely failed. Perhaps it may prove possible by regulation to reduce the direct and indirect impact on political equality, effective participation, and political understanding of vast differences in income and wealth, but the record so far is dispiriting. It is time—long past time—to consider the other approach. Moreover, considerations of substantive distributive justice would seem to

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require a considerable reduction in inequalities in wealth and incomes. At the very least, the question of distribution of wealth and income ought to be high on the agenda of a national politics.

As to the second of the adverse consequences of corporate capitalism, the enormous expansion of hierarchical systems of control, we need to be open to new ideas about governing economic enterprises and to a rapidly growing body of experience and experiments in this country and abroad. I believe that the requisites of procedural democracy hold for the people who work in economic enterprises, and that the criteria of procedural democracy ought therefore to be applied to the government of firms. But a reasonable claim can be made for each of many other possibilities. Moreover, it seems obvious, though often ignored, that forms of control are not fully determined by forms of ownership. Government ownership is as consistent as private ownership with despotic control of enterprises. The form of control should be treated as a problem that is prior to the question of the form of ownership. What is a desirable form of ownership ought to be viewed, at least in part, as subordinate to and dependent on a judgment as to what is a desirable form of control. In any case, the range of alternatives this country ought to consider and experiment with is really quite broad and needs a great deal of systematic study.

Let us now turn back to the fourth and fifth historic commitments of the United States mentioned earlier. It is not an excessively harsh judgment to say that over three decades the presidency was transformed into a kind of plebiscitary principate with despotic tendencies toward arbitrary, ruthless, and self-aggrandizing exploitation of power. What is more, the other major political actors, including the Congress, the Supreme Court, the parties, the electorate, and the most active and attentive political strata all collaborated in that transformation. Only with the utmost reluctance and in the final hour was the Congress compelled to rediscover in the impeachment process a constitutional means for firing a president guilty of criminal acts. Now that impeachment has been used successfully and shown to be effective and salubrious, it is not too much to hope that the machinery will be kept oiled and ready for use. No president should ever again forget that he or she is anything other than the chief executive officer of a democratic republic.

If one part of the Constitution has proved to be workable, the fact that there was a need for impeachment proved how badly the constitutional system had been working. Yet nothing has changed in the fundamental institutional structure itself to reduce the pressures toward the pseudodemocratization of the presidency. For it still remains true that without a strong concentration of political resources in the presidential office, the policies preferred by a majority of citizens and their elected representatives stand a good chance of defeat by a well-entrenched opposition. Not only is this arrangement inconsistent with procedural democracy but it is arbitrary and unfair in its substantive results. Moreover, taken over any considerable period of time the evidence does not show that these minority vetoes constitute a defense of primary rights; rather, they tend to ensure the triumph of secondary rights or privileges over primary rights.

Taking all these problems into account, political scientists need to begin a serious and systematic reexamination of the constitutional system much beyond anything done up to now. They need to give serious and systematic attention to possibilities that may initially seem unrealistic, such as abolishing the presidential veto; creating a collegial chief executive; institutionalizing adversary processes in policy decisions; establishing an office of advocacy to represent interests not otherwise adequately represented in or before Congress and the administrative agencies, including future generations; creating randomly selected citizen assemblies parallel with the major standing committees of the Congress to analyze policy and make recommendations; creating a unicameral Congress; inaugurating proportional representation and a multiparty system in congressional elec-

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tions; and many other possibilities. Unfortunately, designing a constitution is very far from an exact science. It is questionable whether the best political scientists, or for that matter citizens drawn from any source, have the knowledge and skills to excel the performance of the framers. Probably we do not even know how best to proceed toward the cultivation of the knowledge and skills of constitution-making that we or our successors may one day be expected to provide.

The difficulty of arriving at knowledge of this kind points directly to the most challenging of the criteria of procedural democracy, the criterion of enlightened understanding. The criteria of political equality and effective participation are intended to ensure that citizens have a final say as to the goals that effectively determine the ends of public policy, and whenever they wish, a final say as to the means as well. But if a people were to meet these criteria perfectly and yet meet the criterion of enlightened understanding badly, the democratic process would be irrelevant to their preferences, needs, and interests. For if people regularly choose means that impede rather than facilitate attaining their goals, or if they invariably choose goals that damage their deeper needs, then of how much value is the process?

The criterion of enlightened understanding is not only the most difficult to meet but the most resistant to precise statement. Every key word in the criterion as it was presented earlier is ambiguous, and the concepts the words are intended to signify are difficult and complex. However, even if it might well be impossible to define the criterion so rigorously as to specify quite precisely what we would regard as a condition of satisfactory fulfillment, it is a much less difficult task to judge when the criterion is *not* satisfactorily met and what some of the obstacles are. Surely, it is far from being satisfactorily attained in this country and elsewhere.

In a loose and general way, it is obvious that if people are to know their preferences, they need knowledge both of means and ends. Adequate knowledge of means and ends requires an understanding not only of the external world but also of the inner world of the self.

It seems obvious too that if citizens are to understand the external world, they must have access to experts. It may have been realistic for Rousseau or Jefferson or the framers but it would be profoundly unrealistic today to expect citizens, even highly educated ones, to have enough technical knowledge. Think of the complexities of current policy decisions: breeder reactor, B-1, Trident, Middle East, catalytic converter, inflation/unemployment trade-offs, rate of increase in the money supply, costs and administrative problems of alternative health care arrangements, SST, Amtrak, limitations on artificial losses, outer continental shelf. . . . Most of the time all of us are ordinary citizens without a great deal of technical knowledge about such matters. Consequently, whatever may have been the situation in previous centuries, in our own and surely in the next, it is foolish to think that the demos can achieve its purposes without experts.

Yet even in the best of circumstances experts are hard to control. Decisions as to means can also determine ends. Democracy only for general ends and meritocracy for means will soon become meritocracy for both means *and* ends. Thus if the demos is to retain final control over ends, citizens will also need responsible and responsive intermediaries—quasi-experts—to help them hold experts accountable, and to gain an adequate understanding of their own basic rights, needs, and interests, and of the policies best designed to satisfy these needs. Even if all our elected officials were to perform this intermediary role well—and many do not—they would not be enough. We need quasi-expert intermediaries spread among the whole body of citizens, so that every citizen has ready access to technical understanding. While it is surely asking too much to expect that most citizens can be experts on many of the issues of national politics, it is not foolish to hope that one day almost every citizen might be sufficiently informed about some of the issues so that a less informed citizen could readily

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turn to a more informed fellow citizen, a quasi-expert, for a responsible clarification of the matter at hand.

When we turn toward the inner self and ask what we need in order to understand the needs and interests of the self, including those crucial aspects of oneself that are inextricably bound up with and require a sympathetic understanding of other selves, we confront a question to which the answer is inescapably open-ended. The answer must be open-ended because at any given moment human consciousness is necessarily limited by itself, that is, by its own condition. It seems not wildly unrealistic to hope that in the epoch ahead, human consciousness will change profoundly, and that what we might now consider as enlightened understanding, and the best ways to reach it, will be seen by our successors in a vastly different perspective. If mankind is spared as much time as separates us from Socrates, or even as brief an interval as separates us from the historical situation that necessarily limited the understanding of Mill, Lincoln, Freud, and Marx, we cannot say what vast transformations human consciousness may undergo. The criterion of enlightened understanding beckons us forward but it cannot tell us what we shall discover.

It goes without saying, of course, that the world is full of the most acute dangers to human progress and even to human survival. More perhaps than at any time in some millions of years, the prospects of humankind depend on the outcome of a perilous race in which the growth of an enlightened understanding of ourselves and our universe is pitted against the consequences of actions taken out of ignorance or misunderstanding of our most fundamental needs and interests.

No matter what it does, this country alone cannot ensure a successful outcome to that race, though we can by our own unaided mistakes cause a fatal outcome. Some Americans may be tempted to conclude that in a world so hazardous, our salvation and that of the world require us to bring the rest of humanity rapidly around to our way of thinking. But experience suggests that when Americans, or anyone else for that matter, begin to talk about a national mission to save the world, it is time for everyone to run for cover. Instead, one might propose a very different approach. If we want to move a bit closer toward the best standards to which we are already committed by our national experience, a good way to start is not so much by trying to change others as by changing ourselves. □

In this article I have drawn freely from a lecture, "Liberal Democracy in the United States," delivered at the University of Texas, February 25, 1976, to be published in *The Prospects for Liberal Democracy*. William Livingston, ed., by the University of Texas Press in 1968. □

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Michael Walzer

Town Meetings & Workers' Control

A Story for Socialists

Introduction

There are 13 arguments for socialism; they have to do with distributive justice, equality, the need for planning, self-respect, fraternity, and so on. But the one that seems to me the easiest and best is a political argument, an extension of the defense of democracy. It has been put forward often over the last 100 years, but it has never, in this country at least, commanded general acceptance. I suppose no doctrine commands general acceptance that is, as Hobbes wrote, "contrary to any man's right of dominion or to the interest of men that have dominion." And yet there is some sense in which we are all democrats, so I shall start from there, assuming that we have good reasons, and see how far I can go.

The central commitment of socialist politics has often been put in a phrase that must be intuitively appealing to democrats: *the abolition of the power of man over man.* Neither democrats nor socialists begin with an assertion of popular sovereignty. Since they everywhere encounter established sovereigns, authorities, hierarchies, conventional claims to rule, they begin with denials and rejections. They are abolitionists. They aim at abolishing two kinds of authority relations, those in which men and women are directly, and those in which they are indirectly, subject to the arbitrary will of another. I will consider these two separately. Direct subjection suggests the immediacy of bondage; it describes the slave, the serf, the servant, all those who bow before some powerful person, defer to him, obey his every command. Direct subjection is pervasive in the old regime, and it is not missing in the new. One recognizes it in those forms of speech, those bodily postures and motions that connote weakness, inferiority, humility, a certain zeal for service, which we are disinclined to accept as spontaneous or voluntary.

Indirect subjection is not so easy to recognize, for it has to do not with relationships but with systems of relationships, and the systems are invisible. What is at issue here is the right of a single person, acting on his own, for reasons of his own, to make decisions seriously affecting the welfare of his fellowmen, without the agreement of those whom his decisions affect. Now we all make decisions all the time that seriously affect others: when I decide to accept a job, for example, my decision has an immediate impact on the life of the next candidate, who would have received an offer had I declined. But it would be odd to think of him as my subject, and I am certainly not required to seek his agreement before making up my own mind. In every society, however, there are positions of recognized power, offices within

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some organizational structure, from which decisions of a different sort are made. The best way to characterize these is to say that they are authoritative decisions, for that invites us to inquire as to the source of the authority. And what is crucial in systems of indirect subjection is that the subjects are not the source. Men and women ruled by an absolute monarch are directly subject in that they must obey his commands and indirectly subject in that they must live with the consequences of his political, economic, and military decisions. Clearly, democratic argument must challenge and does challenge both these forms of subjection.

The principle of the second challenge is nicely expressed in an old maxim, a rule of law, I believe, in medieval times, honored regularly in the breach: *what touches all should be decided by all.* It's not every decision affecting others that must be democratically made, but only those affecting everyone. That does not mean everyone in the world; I think we should take it to mean everyone associated in some common enterprise the existence or success of which requires that decisions be made. Thus the medieval maxim was invoked in disputes about authority relations in guilds, churches, towns, and states. No doubt, there are problems with this (and every other) restriction on the reach of the maxim, for decisions made within some particular association are certain to affect not only members, but nonmembers as well—and may affect them seriously indeed, as the example of state decisions and international politics suggests. But since this is a general difficulty for democratic theory, and not a special difficulty for socialists, I am going to put it aside (I'll come back to it briefly later on). My own argument requires only this much: that for any authoritative decision seriously affecting others, there is some subset of those affected who ought to authorize the decision or to make it or approve it themselves. The subset includes, but is not necessarily limited to, those people whose association makes the decision possible or necessary—as the association of Frenchmen, for example, makes possible the French king's decision to go to war or requires him to oppose an armed invasion.

The argument also assumes that the king cannot decide to break up the association (or to cooperate with the invaders) rather than allow its members to join him in decision-making. It is not the case that the authorities can seek support for their decisions just anywhere. Thus Bertolt Brecht's satiric poem, written in Berlin, 1953:

> After the rising of the 17th of June
> The Secretary of the Writers' Union
> Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee
> In which you could read that the People
> Had lost the Government's confidence
> Which it could only regain
> By redoubled efforts. Would it in that case
> Not be simpler if the Government
> Dissolved the People
> And elected another?

The satire depends on the commonly accepted principle that the dissolution of the government is a popular right. But it should also be said that the dissolution of the *people* is a popular right. The cohesion that makes it possible to speak of "touching all" and being "decided by all" can only be dissolved by all. And this is true however the association was made and whatever the role of the king or the authorities in making it. The argument is not dependent upon an original contract; it works whatever stories about the origin and foundation of the common enterprise are accepted by the participants, including stories about great men, godlike acts, vanguard revolutions, and so on.

Now, it is the socialist claim that these two forms of arbitrary power—the power of persons and positions—have not been abolished through the establishment of a democratic state. For the state is not our only common enterprise; nor do the laws of the state constitute the only disciplinary system to which we are subject. The capitalist economy proliferates what are plausibly called private governments. Within capitalist organizations a process of decision-making can be marked out, dominated by officials, which has the

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crucial characteristics of a political regime. The process has outcomes that seriously affect thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, including men and women whose cooperative activity underlies the organization and who are in some sense its members. These outcomes take the form of decisions and rules that can be opposed or ignored by the members only at the risk of penalties. Here are participants who are subjects, officials who act with authority. What is the source of that authority? It clearly does not derive from the participants, else it would not be called private. It derives instead, or it is said to derive, from the ownership of the organization by particular persons. Their claim to govern, to make decisions affecting others, rests on the legal and, what is more important, the moral implications of private property. Socialists argue that this is not a tenable claim, and it is at this point that many democrats part company with them, insisting that economic enterprises are unlike political associations precisely because the former are subject to ownership and the latter are not.

It should be said, however, that in their time democrats also challenged the implications of ownership—as these were understood within the feudal economy. For feudalism, like capitalism, rested on a certain view of property rights, specifically on the view that the ownership of land entitled the owner to exercise direct disciplinary (judicial and police) powers over the men and women who lived on the land and also to make decisions (to go to war with some neighboring landowner, for example) seriously affecting their lives. In the course of many years of political conflict and revolutionary activity, the formal structure of feudal rights was abolished and the disciplinary powers of the feudal lords were socialized. Taxation, law enforcement, conscription: all these ceased to be property rights. In Marxist terms, the state was emancipated from civil society, that is, from the property system. The implications of ownership were redefined so as to exclude certain sorts of decision-making that, it was thought, could only be authorized by the political community as a whole. This redefinition established the central division along which social life is organized today. On the one side are activities called political; on the other, activities called economic. On both sides, men and women make authoritative decisions affecting others, but the maxim *what touches all should be decided by all* applies only in the realm of politics. Hence socialism has commonly been described as the extension of democratic decision-making from the political to the economic realm.

But this description may be misleading, for the two realms do not seem to me at all distinct. They are subject, of course, to conventional definition; but there is no need for us to accept the conventions of 1789. Indeed, the political argument for socialism is strongest insofar as it suggests the radical similarity of decision-making in the two realms. What justifies the contemporary version of property rights, we are commonly told, is the entrepreneurial zeal, the risk-taking, the inventiveness, the capital investment, through which economic enterprises are founded, sustained, and expanded. Whereas feudal property was founded on armed force and sustained and expanded through the power of the sword (even though it was also traded and inherited), capitalist property rests upon forms of activity that are intrinsically noncoercive. The factory is distinguished from the manor, the disciplinary system of the first is upheld and that of the second condemned, because men and women come willingly to work in the factory, drawn by the wages, working conditions, prospects for the future that the owner offers, which are made possible by his energy and enterprise, while the workers on the manor are serfs, prisoners of their noble lords. All this may well be true; in any case, I will not question it now; it helps us understand why feudalism was not an ideal political or economic arrangement. But it does not draw the line between democratic politics and the capitalist economy, nor does it justify the present authority of owners. For political communities are also created by entrepreneurial energy and enterprise, and it's not implausible to say of cities and towns, if not

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always of states, that they recruit and hold their citizens by offering them an attractive place to live. Yet ownership is not an acceptable source of governmental authority in cities and towns. If we consider deeply why this is so, we will have to conclude, I think, that it should not be acceptable in companies or factories either. What is necessary is to imagine a man who claims to own a town, to tell a story—it must be a success story—about the life of a political entrepreneur.

The Story

LONG AGO, when the frontier was still somewhere east of the Great Plains, a young man named J.J. set out to make his fortune. He was bold, adventurous, energetic, and very smart, and he left Boston and New York, even Pittsburgh and Cincinnatti behind him. After hardships and excitements not worth mentioning, he staked out a claim to a large and rich piece of land at the bend of a river, one of the smaller western tributaries of the Mississippi. But J.J. was not a farmer. He hated domestic animals, and while he could plow as straight a furrow as anyone in the West, the accomplishment gave him no joy. Soon, he acquired land on the other side of the river and built a ferry, which he ran himself. It was a well-built and well-run ferry. J.J. was a gregarious man, and he entertained his passengers as he took them across; he was warm and funny and full of stories. The enterprise was a success, and after a year or so a few men settled nearby, a storekeeper, a blacksmith, even a preacher, renting the land from J.J. He provided a small lot for a small church and happily watched the settlement grow. When word came of a threatened Indian attack, he organized its defense, bringing in (and paying for) vital supplies from the East. There was an attack of sorts, though only by a small raiding party, and J.J. was in the forefront of the defenders—12 or 15 people now, mostly heads of families, who recognized and accepted him as their leader. He would have been the newest of new men in Boston or New York, but in this little settlement, he was the oldest, the richest, the most well-established of the inhabitants.

About this time, J.J. went East to borrow some money. He now had visions of a city, for the river bend was a good location, the ferry was busy, there were new farms on both sides of the river, and the farmers needed supplies, schools, sermons, and company. He got the money from a young banker who was bold, adventurous, energetic, and very smart. Back home, he bought more land, laid out a square, set aside lots for a school and a town hall. Though no one had yet died in the settlement, he provided a cemetery too, sure that people would die and not unhappy about that. Dead bodies lend dignity to the place where they lie; a town with a cemetery has staying power. He incorporated the town in accordance with territorial law and gave it the name he had always had in mind: J-town. The law did not specify any particular form of government, but J.J. again had something in mind. When the town hall was built (at his own expense), he moved in. The settlers were not surprised; nor was there any opposition. J.J. was still a gregarious man; he knew them all, talked to them all, always consulted with them about matters of common interest. As at the time of the Indian raid, his leadership was recognized and accepted. Anyway, they all paid him rent, and it did not seem strange to pay him taxes too—a per-capita levy for the salary of the schoolteacher, the maintenance of public buildings, and other minor expenses. J.J. himself took no salary. His ferry was doing well, and he had begun to transport goods up and down the river. His enterprises expanded as the town grew and, to a considerable extent, the town grew because his enterprises expanded.

Years went by. J.J. prospered, paid off the loan, delighting himself and the Eastern banker. J-town prospered; new settlers arrived every year; there was money in the treasury. The town lines were redrawn. Now there were tax-payers who did not pay rent to J.J., though he still owned most of the town and continued to serve as mayor. When it became necessary to appoint other town officers, he talked to his friends and neighbors and always

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picked the right man. He had a knack for making decisions, not only decisions that paid off, but ones that pleased people. And if anyone wasn't pleased, he could always move on; J.J. would pat him on the back and talk about the wide Western spaces. He treated criminals the same way. He didn't like locking people up, and he thought it enough of a punishment to have to leave J-town.

J.J. was a natural leader, a man of substance, a man of power. He proved himself again when the flood came, risking his boats on the rapidly rising river in order to evacuate the settlers and their movable possessions, contributing freely to the relief fund. Later on, he went East for a second time to raise money, signing the papers in his own name and bringing home the capital that made it possible to rebuild J-town. The townspeople could hardly imagine another mayor. Nor could J.J.

LIFE WAS PLACID in J-town; time passed quickly. Revivalist preachers came and went; a labor organizer arrived one day and departed the next; the Republican party sent someone to talk to J.J. and the visitor did not find it necessary to talk to anyone else. The dissidence of dissent was absent. Or so it was until J.J., aging now, appointed his son chief of police. Perhaps there had been murmurings before that, but they were scarcely audible. Many of the new settlers did not remember J.J.'s earlier days, did not really believe the stories of his heroic exploits, or—what was worse—did not think the stories mattered. But the town was well-run, and they were content not to worry about it; they didn't think of politics as something that was missing from their lives; to all appearances they didn't think about it at all.

Still, the appointment of his son was a political mistake—J.J.'s first. His son wasn't particularly bold, adventurous, energetic, or smart, and everyone in town knew it. A few of the newer inhabitants called a meeting at the Odd Fellow's Lodge (the town hall had no assembly room). Only a small number of people came, but they shouted a lot, worked one another up, formed a citizen's committee, and called another meeting. This time more people came; the speeches were exciting, and the participants went home feeling differently about J-town than they had ever felt before. There was a third meeting, and on the following afternoon a delegation of citizens called on J.J.

No one took notes that afternoon, but what was said was repeated all over town. The citizens told the mayor that he could appoint his son to any position he liked in J's River Haulage, Inc., but the town, they said, was not one of his businesses. Town government was the *public* business, and henceforth the public would have to be brought into it in some regularized manner. What touches all should be decided by all, they said. They demanded that elections be held, and they intimated that they had a candidate for mayor in mind whom they preferred to J.J.

J.J.'s reply was a passionate defense of entrepreneurial rights. What do you mean? he said. *This is my town.* I found this place; I built my ferry here, and other people came because of the ferry. I risked my life against the Indians. I risked my capital to buy this land and raise on it the buildings people needed. Your children are studying, right now, in schools I made possible; your dead are buried on land I gave. When the flood came, I did it all again, giving money, raising money, organizing reconstruction. This town wouldn't exist without me and, what's more, I still own most of it. All of you came here with your eyes open; you knew how this town was run; you knew who made the decisions around here. Don't talk to me about elections . . .

J.J. had never lacked for words. And everything he said was true. He did not have to make things up, for he was indeed a great man and had done great things. If it were possible to own a town, he certainly deserved to own this one. The citizens insisted, however, that it wasn't possible. J.J. was the founder, not the owner of J-town, they said, and they would happily put up a statue of him in Central Park. (On land I gave you, muttered J.J.) He was entitled to honor and glory, but not to obedience. He was entitled to

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rent, but they would tax themselves. They did not mean to sound ungrateful, they said, they weren't ungrateful, but political foundation and public service did not give a man the right to tyrannize over others.

How can I be a tyrant, shouted J.J., when it's my own town?

The next weeks were exciting, but the events are not worth mentioning here. The citizens' insurrection was successful. J.J. fell. His son never became chief of police. J.J. withdrew from public life, did not vote in the first town elections, never attended town meetings, turned away from his friends and neighbors. When he died, not long after, the town council commissioned a statue, as the insurgent citizens had promised. The new mayor made a fine speech when the statue was unveiled. J.J., he said, was a heroic figure, a man of the pioneering past, a founding father. The town owed him a profound debt, a spiritual debt, of which the statue could only be a lasting reminder. It was true, the mayor said, that J.J. had occasionally confused business and politics, but, after all, that was a confusion not uncommon in American life.

J.J.'s son had occasion to reflect upon that last remark when the town council, only a few years later, tried to take over the river haulage company. They would have paid him handsomely, had the state supreme court allowed the take-over, but money, they insisted, was all he was entitled to in return for his father's investment. Decisions about whether or not to expand the ferry service, buy new boats, and so on—those could not be made by one man, they said, considering only his private profit. The whole town was a transportation center; all its citizens depended on the haulage company; most of them worked for it. And what touches all, they said, should be decided by all. . . .

Interpretation of the Story

I HAD originally planned to write about a company town, drawing upon actual historical accounts. The story would then have described how the owners of an economic enterprise created a political community, so to speak, on the side, as a place for their employees to live. Upon reflection, it seemed better to imagine a case where the major entrepreneurial activity was focused on the town itself, so that J.J. would stand in the great tradition of the political founder. He represents the liberal form of that tradition, which is to say, he has no deep convictions about the shape of the town or the moral character of its citizens. He merely wants them to live peaceably and to prosper. But he is clearly comparable, despite that, to the figures celebrated by Machiavelli and Rousseau—Lycurgus, Solon, Romulus—who made or remade the political community. Now, in that tradition, founding or reforming the state generates no right of ownership and none of the subsidiary rights that ownership brings with it in feudal manors or in capitalist factories or companies. Most important, it does not give rise to any sort of disciplinary authority over those who join the new community. That authority belongs to the members, even if they were passive or entirely absent during the period of foundation.

Why are economic associations any different?

Not because of the entrepreneurial vision, energy, inventiveness, and so on, that goes into the making of the company: the making of J-town required exactly the same qualities. There are certainly objects in the world that a man can acquire through enterprise and invention. Making them or mixing his labor with them, as John Locke argued, produces at least a presumption of ownership. But it's not the case that *anything* can be acquired that way, and if towns cannot be, there is no reason to think that companies can. These two are much nearer to one another than either is to the land I cultivate, the wood I cut, the chair I build, the book I write—the examples that Locke had in mind. What brings them close together is that both of them involve other people, shared interests, cooperative activity.

Not because of the investment of capital: J.J. invested his own money in J-town without becoming an owner. Nor do men and women who buy municipal bonds come to own the municipality. They acquire no political rights

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at all. Unless they are already citizens, they cannot even participate in deciding how to spend their own money. They are entitled to a specified rate of interest, and that is their only entitlement. The members of the political community are conceived to have rights of a different sort, simply by virtue of their membership, whether they have invested money in the community or not. There seems no reason not to make the same distinction in economic associations, marking off investors from participants, a just return from authoritative decision-making.

Not because men and women join a company voluntarily, with full knowledge of the established structure of authority: the settlers in J-town arrived freely, and the same knowledge was available to them, as J.J. told the citizens' delegation. If I settle in a state founded and ruled by a powerful despot, my knowledge of his despotism does not make the act of settlement into an act of consent. Nor is my prompt departure the only way I can express my opposition to despotic government. That may be the case with a man who joins a monastic order requiring strict and unquestioning obedience. Here the new member seems to be choosing a way of life, and his choice entails a particular disciplinary rule. We would not be paying him proper respect if we denied the efficacy of his choice; its purpose and its moral effect is precisely to authorize his superior; he can't withdraw that authority without himself withdrawing from the common life it makes possible.

But that is not true of a man who joins a company or who comes to work in a factory. In these associations, the common life does not require unquestioning obedience, and we respect the new member only if we assume that he does not seek subjection. Of course, he encounters supervisors, foremen, company police, as he knew he would, and it may be that the success of the economic enterprise requires his obedience, just as the success of the political association requires that citizens obey public officials. But in neither case do we want to say (what we might say to the novice monk): if you don't like these officials and the orders they give, you can always leave. It is important that there be options short of leaving, connected with the appointment of the officials and the making of the rules they enforce. We see this clearly in the case of towns and also, curiously, in the case of labor unions. In the U.S. today, the democratic rights of union members are legally protected. But the rights of company employees are only indirectly protected insofar as they are unionized (and insofar as their union has won some share in company decision-making).*

Entrepreneurial vision, capital investment, the freedom to join or not to join: none of these satisfactorily distinguish economic from political associations. None of them accounts for, let alone justifies, the privacy of a private government.

But there are two differences between towns and companies that I have not yet considered. First of all, a town is an association of residents; a company is an association of workers, who live somewhere else. Perhaps the maxim, *what touches all should be decided by all,* only applies to residential communities. Monasteries and unions are immediate counterexamples, monasteries because they are residential communities to which the maxim does not apply, unions because they are non-residential communities to which it does apply. Nevertheless, it is true that ordinary democrats have generally tried to organize people where they live, socialists where they

*There are other sorts of organizations that raise more difficult problems. What about bureaucracies, for example, or schools? Or consider an example that Marx used (in *Capital,* Vol. III) to illustrate the nature of authority in a Communist factory: cooperative labor requires, he wrote, "one commanding will," and he compared this will to that of an orchestra conductor. A strange comparison, for conductors have historically been tyrannical figures. Should their will be commanding? Perhaps it should, but I doubt that Marx's comparison is a good one, for orchestras must express a single interpretation of the music they play, while patterns of work in a factory are more readily negotiated. The political rights of individuals are relative to the character of the activities in which they voluntarily engage. But this general principle needs to be worked out in detail.

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work (though not only there), and some distinction might be drawn along these lines. The self-government of residents, it might be said, is more obvious and important than that of workers. Men and women must collectively control the place where they live in order to be safe in their own homes.

There is certainly no other place where it is so important to be safe. Hence another ancient maxim: a man's home is his castle. I will assume that this maxim expresses a genuine moral imperative. What does it require? Not self-government, but rather the protection of a private sphere, a piece of nonpolitical space for withdrawal, rest, secrecy, and solitude. As a feudal baron retired to his castle to brood over public slights, so I retire to my home. But the political community is not a collection of brooding places, or not only that. It is a common enterprise, a public place where we are seen and heard by others, where we quarrel over the public interest, where we sometimes work together. That is why the meetings in J-town were so exciting. They represented the discovery or creation of a local republic, a *public thing,* which by its very nature had to be shared once it was known to exist. And in this sense, an economic enterprise seems to be very like a town, even though, or in part because, it is so unlike a home. It is not a place of withdrawal, but of cooperative activity. It is not a place that anyone needs to own in order to safeguard his independence and solitude. No one ever thought of saying, a man's factory is his castle. The moral independence of the men and women who work in a factory requires shared decision-making and not the protection of a private sphere. Surely we grant that point whenever we require union democracy, and having done that, there seems no principled reason to stop short of company democracy.

But let's think about stopping short, exactly as we presently do. Imagine that the inhabitants of J-town, instead of calling for elections, had organized a citizens' union and bargained collectively with J.J. and his heirs. It is interesting to speculate on the range of issues they might have bargained about. Which matters would lie beyond their reach, once they had conceded the issue of ownership? Presumably, they would not have had much to say if J.J. had decided to relocate the town (since it was "his" town). But they could have bargained in detail about living conditions within it, about zoning laws, traffic control, sewage disposal, and so on. They could not have vetoed his choice for chief of police, but it is possible to imagine grievance machinery that would function somewhat like a civilian board of review. The picture is not entirely unattractive, but it is not what we mean by democracy or, at least, it is not all that we mean. Particular groups of city employees do form unions and negotiate with the mayor, but their members also vote for the mayor with whom they negotiate. Members of pressure groups participate in the same dual way, though the arrangements are less formal. They bargain and they vote, acting simultaneously as men and women with particular interests and as men and women with general interests. That seems the right arrangement for economic enterprises also, whose participants are concerned both with their immediate returns and with the well-being of the enterprise as a whole.

The second difference between towns and companies follows from the separation of residence and work. The citizens of a town are also the consumers of the goods and services the town provides—and they are, except for occasional visitors, the only consumers of those goods and services. But the "citizens" of a company are producers of goods and services; they are only sometimes consumers, and they are never the only consumers. Hence there are large numbers of other people, outside the company, who have a direct and material interest in what goes on inside. What should their role be in company decision-making? The question is often raised in the literature on workers' control, and it is variously answered. Here I don't want to answer it again, only to insist that the sorts of arrangements required in a fully developed industrial democracy are not very different from those required in a political democracy. For we don't, after all, grant absolute

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authority to town governments, even over the goods and services they produce for internal consumption. We enmesh our towns in a federal structure, and we regulate what they can and cannot do in areas like education, criminal justice, environmental use, and so on. No doubt, companies would be similarly enmeshed. In a developed economy, as in a developed polity, different decisions are made by different groups of people at different levels. The division of power in both these cases is only partly a matter of principle; it is also a matter of circumstance and expediency.

THE CASE IS SIMILAR with the particular constitutional arrangements necessary within companies and factories. There will, of course, be many difficulties in working these out; there will be false starts and failed experiments, as there have been in the previous history of political democracy. Nor should we expect a single resolution of all problems. Proportional representation, single member constituencies, mandated and independent representatives, bicameral and unicameral legislatures, city managers, regulatory commissions, public corporations—the common business is done and should continue to be done in many ways. What is important is that it be known to be common and that our participation in it be recognized as a matter of right.

Today, there are many men and women who preside over enterprises in which hundreds and thousands of their fellow citizens are involved, who make decisions that shape the lives of their fellows, and who defend and justify themselves exactly as J.J. did. I own this place, they say, I built this factory, I founded this company, I risked my capital, I make the decisons around here. It has been my purpose to argue that people who speak this way are wrong. They misunderstand the prerogatives of foundation and investment. They claim an authority to which they have no right. It has not been my purpose, however, to deny the significance of entrepreneurial activity. In both towns and companies one looks for energetic people, willing to innovate and take risks. It would be foolish to create a system that did not bring them forward. They are of no use to us if they just brood in their castles.

On the other hand, nothing they do or can do gives them a right to rule over others—unless they win the agreement of the others. This means that at a certain point in the development of an enterprise, it must pass out of entrepreneurial control. Its founders have created, or they have led other men and women in creating, a *public thing*, which must now be run in some public way. It is often said that economic entrepreneurs will not come forward if they cannot hope to own the companies they make. The best response is to point to the other side of that all-important but entirely conventional dividing line: we do not lack for political entrepreneurs, though they cannot hope to own the state. Possession is not the goal of public life, but that does not mean that there are not attractive and even compelling goals. For one thing, we can go on building statues of worthy men and women—the founders but not the owners of our common wealth. □

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Philip Green

Social Democracy & Its Critics: The Case of England

An American living in England after a while begins to notice certain events and institutions, trivial or profound, that seem to add up to a distinctive social pattern.

- In American suburbs and even in many cities today the center of communal, group, and family life is the bowling alley complex: hub of a multibillion-dollar industry that offers among its by-products food (fast and slow) and drink, equipment and machinery, clothing and other accessories, and associated or subordinate forms of entertainment (e.g., dancing, ice skating). In England that center is still the simple pub.
- In England refrigerators are very small (an American visitor in an English kitchen can easily miss seeing the fridge altogether) and so are the milk bottles. Larger milk bottles would not fit into the standard refrigerator; milk thus does not come in larger containers, and thus there is no need for larger refrigerators. Thus also a great many low-paying jobs providing daily milk delivery to the population are kept available.
- English workers do not strike much more often than American workers, but an astonishingly large proportion of their strikes turns out to be against fellow workers, to protect traditional lines of demarcation at the workplace, pay differentials, etc.
- When the films of Marcel Ophuls are shown on BBC-TV, the dubbed-in English voices signal social class very carefully: officers, politicians (of the right or center), and businessmen speak in the poshest BBC accents, whereas "common" soldiers and workers speak in accents ranging from pronounced working-class to cockney. But when we are allowed to hear the original French and German voices the social class variations are not nearly so marked.
- Street repairmen spend a lot of time sitting under tents drinking tea, or keeping out of mild rains.
- Members of the very extensive royal family, who do absolutely nothing at all, are eagerly sought after to be the honorary heads of educational and scientific institutions, public-service bodies, and businesses. In that role they always receive considerably more publicity than the actual managers of the enterprise.
- A majority of the top executives surveyed by the *Times* were educated at Oxford or Cambridge where, like most of their peers in British business, they received no training in business management.
- Respondents to a nationwide survey, by significant majorities, expect life to be worse rather than better in the future, hope to maintain rather than to improve their social positions and, given a choice between more leisure or more income, would choose leisure.
- No one (or, hardly anyone) seems to try very hard to sell anything. Most shops and sometimes even large stores are open only at the hours most inconvenient for their customers; proprietors apologize for prices; clerks in expensive shops display attitudes verging on complete contempt toward poten-

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tial clientele clothed merely in normal dress.

- A merchant at a major street market, asked for a quantity of the fresh mint that is plainly visible on his stand, replies that the mint is available only to those who also buy Jersey new potatoes, which are eaten with mint sauce. No, he says sternly, no merchant on the street will violate that rule. But there is one old-age pensioner with a small stand around the corner; he is allowed by the other merchants to sell mint to people who are not buying Jersey new potatoes.
- Everyone seems to be in some kind of uniform, even when wearing ordinary clothes. Seeing Frederick Wiseman's film *Meat*, about the American wholesale meat industry, one notices that the union and management negotiators are dressed virtually alike, in semi-informal clothes.

The picture that one finally begins to see (from an aggressively modernist and Americanist perspective, of course) is that of a very class-conscious society, in which the prerogatives and traditions of the past are jealously guarded; in which the personal and status satisfactions of the producer clearly take precedence over the multiplication of either production through hard work or consumption through a drive to growth. Thus the overall dynamic of the domestic economy seems to emphasize keeping things roughly the same, rather than changing and increasing them: Britain is a low-growth, low-productivity society, and clearly has been for a long time. A look at the history books and the data collections confirms this impression, moreover: Great Britain has been falling steadily behind the rest of the industrialized world throughout the 20th century; industrial decay and urban blight were already a prominent part of the landscape of several of its major cities at the turn of this century. One remembers that George Dangerfield wrote a book about the Edwardian period entitled *The Strange Death of Liberal England*; little that one sees in 1977 seems to call for a reversal of that verdict.

What other Europeans call "the English disease," then, clearly antedates by some time the coming to England of the welfare state, which retrospectively was not so much an attempt to humanize a booming economy as to soften the cruel edges of a (comparatively speaking) declining one. The inadequacies of the British welfare state are therefore clearly visible, and defenders of unrepentant capitalism, who usually manifest no interest in the more (much more) successful social democracies of the Continent, have always preferred to study Great Britain, the weak sister of the social democratic world.

II

Much as though an enemy of representative government had convened a symposium on "the political system that doesn't work: parliamentary democracy's failures in Italy," R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., the editor of a new American journal called *The Alternative* (new in being but old in spirit) has brought together a group of American and English contributors, in a book under the overall title, *The Future That Doesn't Work: Social Democracy's Failures in Britain* (New York: Doubleday, 1977). None of these contributors seems to have noticed that in discussing Great Britain they are really discussing a *past* that doesn't work (or that works in ways not appreciated by those of us with other expectations). But that is because with two exceptions they behave as ideologues, not social scientists, dedicated to helping the editor prevent the coming of "the institutions of British social democracy to these shores."

Unfortunately, the collection offers virtually no serious discussion of those institutions. There is an incompetent essay by Harry Schwartz on the British Health Service, which makes the points that the National Health is "threadbare and financially starved," that there are still "great inequalities in the health services available to the people of Britain," and that there is an excess of demand for medical services greater than that foreseen by the National Health's founders. Schwartz does not explain how a poor country could have a rich health service; nor does he explain

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that the remark about inequality, which comes from a Labour minister, is intended to ginger the equalization process in a health service already many times more egalitarian than that available to Americans; nor does he compare the crucial statistics of health care, namely those of life expectancy, time lost from jobs because of illness or accident, and infant mortality, for all of which Britain leads the U.S. even though it lags behind the Continent.

By contrast, Leslie Lenkowski's scholarly description of the welfare state in Britain simply falsifies the stated views of the editor, although the latter seems not to have noted this fact. Lenkowski's summary is that the British welfare state has had a slight redistributive effect, and that "to the extent that [it] has promoted equality, it has done so by leveling up, rather than down." He also points out that in 1967, by which year there had been less than a decade of serious Labour party government in this century, the pretax distribution of British income was "already fairly egalitarian . . . by international standards": a condition, again, having nothing to do with "socialist" income policies but rather with Britain's position as a traditionalist and relatively nonaffluent capitalist society. The one serious criticism he makes of British social democracy is that though the "service state" succeeded quite well in fulfilling its intentions, it has grown too fast to do so any longer, without becoming a dangerous drag in the context of an otherwise declining economy. "As in Sweden and the United States," he notes, "providing services is now the occupation of a majority of the labor force, including the one out of six who work in the public sector. Britain differs from Sweden and the United States (and even more from other countries still moving in the same direction) in that industrial growth has been laggard."

Lenkowski does not go at length into the reasons for that situation, several of which I've already mentioned. a cultural bias against certain kinds of work, the excessive export of both financial and human capital during the imperialist period, a general social conservatism and comparatively strong class-consciousness, an aversion to practicing the arts of modern salesmanship, all of which (and no doubt many other causes as well) have helped to produce an industrial sector that has become less and less internationally competitive in the course of this century. But he does conclude that *"the programs of the welfare state deserve relatively little of the blame":* so much for "the alternative." (James Q. Wilson, in his serious though rather pointless study of crime in England, also gives little comfort to his editor, since it appears that the "socialist" Britons have much sterner attitudes than Americans about the prevention and punishment of crime, and that their less lenient institutions have not prevented a great increase in British crime during the past two decades, although its level is still much below the American level; his cursory attempt to assess causes turns up nothing about the impact of "socialism.")

Lenkowski's conclusion is that the condition of the British welfare state, for better and worse, is a legacy of Britain's past; this offers little support in principle to either the supporters or critics of social democracy, but is a helpful antidote to the shrieks of dismay that surround him. On the other hand, it is when ideology breaks through the mask of social science that *The Future That Doesn't Work* actually becomes most interesting, for then at last we learn what really actuates this ideology. It is not, we discover, the "failure" of social democracy that upsets the *English* contributors to this volume at all. Rather, what dismays them is *the success of popular democracy in England:* the triumph of universal suffrage, and the achievement of civil liberty for organized workers. The tears they shed for social democracy are crocodile tears, because these men are not democrats of any kind. They are antidemocrats.

The "engagingly simple political philosophy" of free, competitive elections, writes Peter Jay, may have been a useful corrective to authoritarianism and paternalism, but "alas, it already has built into it the tension—historicists might say the contradiction—that lies at the root of our

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present troubles. . . . Indeed, the essence of democratic politics is a gigantic celebration of the fact that you *can* get something for nothing, or at least that *you*—the individual voter—can get something for nothing . . ." In like language Samuel Brittan of *The Financial Times* points to "the generation of *excessive* expectations" [my italics—P.G.], which "follows from the competitive nature of democracy. . . ."

More subtly, Patrick Cosgrave of the *Daily Telegraph* laments the "failure of the Conservative Party, 1945-75," by which he turns out to mean the success of its leaders in erecting "a somewhat superficially glittering rhetoric, which convinced the electorate that the more popular elements of the Labour program were accepted. . . ." And he castigates Edward Heath for having "pondered the spectrum of consensus and, like Mr. Macmillan, moved to the left." The unrepentant Tory intellect, a century late, discovers the real horror of universal suffrage and representative government: that once in a while the majority really does rule, and leaders really do what it wants. ". . . However difficult it may be to break with the consensus of the postwar years, this must be done if the British Conservative Party is not to go the way of its Scandinavian counterparts, reduced to impotent rumps following their pragmatic adoption of the nostra of socialism." These counterparts are not exactly impotent in either Sweden or Denmark today, of course, but presumably what Mr. Cosgrave cannot forgive them for is that they willingly participate in the management of economies that despite constant "intrusions" from the state and the general current decline of Western European capitalism are still two to three times as productive as Great Britain's. They accept without sufficient qualm, that is, the "engagingly simple" notion that what the great number of people thinks benefits them is what parties of the people should endorse.

Just which more sophisticated political philosophy is supposed to replace simple Benthamite liberalism? On this point ideologues of the new conservatism try to maintain a discreet silence. Peter Jay even refers to "the depradations practiced on mankind by authoritarian and paternalist regimes in the name of higher values." But on close inspection of his and the other essays in this volume, one begins to think that "authoritarian and paternalist regimes" are precisely what these Englishmen long for—regimes that will put labor unions in their place, and undo a century's damage of painfully achieved liberal democracy.

Their reasoning also might be called "engagingly simple." According to Brittan, "union monopolies differ in an important way from other organized groups," in that only they "will normally withdraw output from the market until representatives of the public sign an agreement to pay more." He doesn't explain how this power differs essentially from that of business and farm monopolies to withhold products from the market until the offered price is "competitive"; or to cut back on the utilization of capacity because of "insufficient demand," even in the face of glaringly evident social *need* for their products. This kind of one-way reasoning is typical of the neoclassical economists and their journalistic followers, for whom the expressed needs of business (to raise prices, lower output, etc.) are always *determined* by impersonal market forces ("Drought conditions in West Africa have forced Tate & Lyle to raise the price of cocoa products 22 percent this year"); whereas the expressed needs of workers always appear as wilful and arbitrary *demands*.

The deeper intellectual problem, however, is that the free-market theorist, having argued out of one side of his mouth that a rational price system necessitates the treating of labor as a commodity like any other, now turns around and refuses to accept the logical consequence of the one distinction upon which, more than any other, market capitalism rests. Owners and managers of capital possess resources or skills that are carefully kept in short supply among a limited group of people; *their* withholding thus appears as no more than a short-run incentive to "rational adjustments" to the price of their goods in the marketplace. Moreover, their

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situation as a class is never deeply painful or questionable, so that again they usually appear not as instigators of class conflict but only as hardheadedly rational economic actors: business monopolists or oligopolists are rarely seen wilfully to "hold society to ransom" as a group.

On the other hand, any attempt to bid up the price of labor collectively is seen as the worst kind of monopolistic behavior, as both Brittan and Jay put it. But it does not occur to these critics of trade-union "monopoly" that workers acting collectively are only acting as the capitalist market economy bids them act. Workers-as-commodities possess no capital and (except for the most skilled among them) they have been carefully trained (or untrained) to have only interchangeable capabilities. They are meant to be treated as averagely priced commodities, and how else can "commodities" act but collectively? The price of labor is a collective price; the price of management and entrepreneurship is (to a much greater extent) an individualized price. Neoconservatives heartily endorse this division of labor and then vent their fury or scorn on its victims. More: the strike is the only kind of action available to workers that gives them even a remote measure of the kind of market power the giant corporate structures routinely exercise. It is as crucial an aspect of universal suffrage as the vote itself, and repudiation of the strike weapon is again repudiation of democracy.

III

But then, for the new conservatives "Labor" is not representing victims but predators; not the people democratic institutions should represent and protect, but the people they should guard against (also for the old conservatives, who after all saw the working class as a dangerous beast before unions were even legal . . .). As Peregrine Worsthorne of the *Daily Telegraph* puts it, trade unions are the "new lads on top"; trade-union violence and "thuggery" are "tolerated by liberal squeamishness" though the police are held in disrespect; trade unionists are "the *nouveaux riches* and take home wage packets that make them the envy of professional people"; trade unions are always portrayed as "David fighting Goliath" in schools and in the mass media; working-class morale is high while middle-class morale is low; trade-union leaders alone are "in a position to exercise power without apology"; and tolerant, squeamish British management has "a wholly inappropriate reluctance to recognize that the paternalistic days of benevolent goodwill have long since passed in history."

Every one of those statements, however, is demonstrably false. In both respect and income, trade unionists still rank toward the bottom end of the table. To be sure, the wages of *highly skilled* trade unionists have approached or surpassed those of, say, schoolteachers or reporters since the wage freeze first took effect (and why not); but a cursory glance at the help-wanted section of the London *Sunday Times* will show that a systems analyst or sales manager or personnel "expert" earns almost twice as much as a spot welder—plus "perks." The differential in favor of media overlords is in the neighborhood of 5 or 7 to 1, and for company directors up to 20 to 1 (plus stock options, tax havens in the Caymans, etc.). Most professionals, furthermore, can hope for a *progression* in their income-earning powers as they get older that is denied to even the most skilled wage workers. (Comparisons that seem to favor the latter are usually between middle-aged workers and young professionals.) Once one drops from the ranks of the most highly skilled wage workers to those whose jobs aren't advertised at all but who simply show up at the plant gate or union hall looking for work, these differentials become even more pronounced (although the major effect of the wage freeze in England during the past few years was to narrow differentials between segments of the wage-earning workforce themselves, much to the discomfort of skilled workers and to the destruction of trade-union solidarity).

Now that the wage freeze has been abolished under pressure from skilled workers, and now that, at last, high levels of

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unemployment seem to be an acceptable part of the landscape in Britain, all these differentials can be expected to increase. But it will still be the case as it always has been that if an American shops at Harrods, or eats at the Connaught Grill, or goes to see the American Ballet Theatre (sitting next to a man in a custom-tailored suit who might be Peter Jay or Peregrine Worsthorne and is volubly complaining about trade-union thugs during intermission), or is living in a house that is for sale in one of the better neighborhoods of North London, he will encounter a multitude of Englishmen and women who seem to be able to afford these relatively high-priced luxuries quite nicely, not to mention the relatively leisurely life that enjoyment of such luxuries implies. And none of them will be wage workers.

As for the "prestige" and "power" of trade unions, the major daily newspapers are almost 100 percent overtly antilabor whenever a labor-management or union-government conflict arises (except in the case when the government is Labour); and they are all covertly antilabor, in the sense indicated above, that the actions of workers are treated as wilful, and those of businesses as determined by market forces. The BBC indeed gives air time to strikers in notorious disputes, but it also tends to focus entirely on exceptionally inflammatory picket-line behavior, never looking at more commonplace strike behavior and also never taking a hard look at what happens inside factories—nor, especially, at the way in which employers use the National Front, or the Special Branch, to break strikes of immigrant laborers. An academic visitor to England will observe that the prestige of the "new lords" consists almost wholly in their having the privilege of being the subject of vituperative conversation wherever educated people or professionals (except the small band of genuine leftists) get together. The "power" of the Trades Union Congress too is greatly overestimated and misunderstood by conservative critics in both Great Britain and the U.S., for the sole use to which that power has been put in the life of the present government has been the employment of TUC officials as shock troops to subdue rank-and-file resistance to the tight money, antiwelfare, proindustry policies of the Labour government. As to the alleged *class* power of the trade-union movement, suffice it to say that after a dozen on-again off-again years of Labour party government, labor legislation in Great Britain is still in a more primitive state in some respects than it is in the U.S., and the grounds on which courts can intervene in labor disputes are even more extensive. The political boundaries between the classes, in sum, are still strong, and the political influence of the average British worker or group of workers still feeble. The attack on organized labor remains an antidemocratic attack on fitful signs of the coming to equal power of what has long been a political underclass in Britain.

IV

How to explain this attack is another matter. Peter Jay *et al.* cannot really be bemoaning the loss of class privilege; that combined horror of inflation and benign view of mass unemployment that all "informed opinion" now expresses is the essence of their own and their class's ideology. What rather gnaws at them, I think, is the fear that they are about to lose that privilege.

Why that fear? The question mires us in the ambiguities of national or class character. Any answer, though, must certainly point to the steady loss of national morale that has accompanied the long decline in comparative national productivity and the gradual surrender of Empire, and that was only momentarily and misleadingly arrested by the unifying experience of World War II. One can only speculate that the prolonged dirge unendingly played out by the residuary legatees of upper-class opinion comes from the sense of failed promise that a once successful, now relatively backward economy produces. For British workers, that sense of national failure results in a degree of class bitterness unrivaled elsewhere in the capitalist world, combined with an exceptional degree

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of political and economic conservatism: fear of collapse leading most often to a desire to preserve rather than to change. The same is true, in reverse, of intellectuals and professionals. Fighting their way upward through the still-oppressive class structure (a structure for which Peregrine Worsthorne, significantly, reserves his most passionate denunciation), they find that their hard-won privilege seems feeble and chancy in comparison with that of their American counterparts. To them too change seems frightening, preservation necessary. Unwilling to turn on the enduring structure of privilege that (even while they excoriate its excrescences) gives shape to their careers, they attack instead the only other available opponent: democracy, however weak its institutionalization and limited its growth, has been and can be in the future the instrument of change in Britain.

Advanced social democracy, meanwhile, as practiced (for example) in Scandinavia and the Low Countries, is a political economy beset by severe contradictions. The richest nations in the world (per capita) are social democracies (the U.S. having dropped off the lead); but their affluence depends on the continuing exploitation of scarce resources, many of them subject to other people's sovereignty. (This is also true of the U.S., of course.) Their legislation is the most egalitarian anywhere in the "West" (and in some cases anywhere at all), but the progressive income taxes that support this legislation more and more come under sustained assault from the middle classes, who work for the incentive of social superiority only to see the promised reward taken away to produce more equality. These are, in short, societies that are trying to be vaguely socialist and egalitarian without abolishing the basic institutions of capitalism ("private" control of the means of production, and hierarchically structured market incentives to work). As such, they are interesting and important experiments that may ultimately show either that the contradictions and limitations of capitalism are insurmountable, or that a different and better social system can be generated out of capitalism by peaceful means.

But such "new conservatives" as the editor of, and some of the British contributors to, *The Future That Doesn't Work,* appear to have no interest in such possibilities. The only slight hope they see in the future is for a more capitalist America that will avoid the "ills" of social democracy. It will also, if they have their way, continue to be the advanced capitalist society in which the average person, white or (especially) black, has the best chance of being born poor, of staying poor, of receiving inadequate or no medical care, of dying in an industrial accident, of being excluded from participation in the management of one's workplace, or of being cast on the scrap heap by an ailing corporation without any attempt being made by anyone to nourish and reward his or her potential productivity. What makes that an attractive prospect must be left to these authors to explain in some future symposium. □

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Robert L. Heilbroner

What Is Socialism?

Following this article are comments by Lewis Coser, Bogdan Denitch, Michael Harrington, and Michael Walzer, to which Robert Heilbroner in turn replies.—EDS.

Beyond the welfare state lies the *terra incognita* we call socialism. It lies there more by assumption than by reconnaissance, for no one has yet observed this socialism in reality: perhaps it will turn out to be a New Atlantis, not a New World. But we assume that socialism lies "beyond" the welfare state because what we generally mean by Western socialism is a set of institutions and cultural attitudes, of social structures and lifeways, that is qualitatively different from those we find under the prevailing state of affairs. Socialism, as most of us think about it, is not just an improved welfare state. It is another kind of society.

What kind? That is a very awkward as well as difficult question, which most socialists, especially Marxists, have been reluctant to examine. When looking at past or present, Marxists like to insist on the necessity of emphasizing the "socioeconomic formations" underlying each separate chapter of history. In so doing, they force an observer to pay special attention to the interaction of social, political, and economic dynamics characteristic of each epoch. But when socialism is mentioned, this tough-minded approach tends to be abandoned, even denigrated as "counterrevolutionary." Socialism then becomes little more than a compass setting, an imagined landfall over the horizon, and no effort is made to discuss even the most basic characteristics that we would expect to be associated with a new chapter of human history.

This failure of nerve—for that is what I think it is—carries serious consequences. It enables us to use the world "socialism" in a way that is purely talismanic and devoid of any operational significance. Worse, it enables us to evade questions and dilemmas that are posed by the analysis of socialism as a chapter of history that lies beyond the welfare state. These questions present painful, even agonizing, choices to those socialists who are devoted to political rights and humanistic culture as we know them in the West. That, however, is a matter for later consideration. For we cannot discuss the structure of the culture of socialism until we have reached agreement on the essential elements of the society that it is to displace. This leads us, as the first step in our argument, to consider the nature of the welfare state.

II

At first blush that seems an unmanageably complex task. There is not one welfare state but many welfare states. The misery of a South Bronx drug "rehabilitation" center, the crude measures of American anticyclical fiscal policy are parts of the welfare apparatus. So are the humane open penal institutions and sophisticated employment policies of Sweden.

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Nonetheless, I believe we can discern a common element that allows us to place all these varied institutions under a single rubric. This common element lies in the relation of the welfare apparatus to its underlying socioeconomic formation, which is of course capitalism. Welfare institutions, I think all will concur, arise mainly to cope with the difficulties and damages that are brought about by the workings of a capitalist system. The welfare state, in a word, is a kind of apotheosis of capitalism—the form that capitalism takes in seeking its own salvation.

Whether or not capitalism will find its salvation, or whether it could survive its salvation, are questions we will disregard here. For if we are to contrast socialism as a socieconomic formation with that of the capitalist welfare state, we must also agree on the difficulties and damages of capitalism to which welfarism addresses itself. And here again, I think we can clearly identify the sets of central problems.

They are two. The first are the difficulties that emerge from the "anarchic" nature of capitalism. Anarchy does not mean an absence of any logic or order in capitalism—there is the famed, and indeed remarkable, "mechanism" of the market. The difficulty, rather, is that the logic and order of capitalism solves some kinds of problems only by imposing others. The market resolves the problem of "efficiency," for example, but it creates such problems as instability, unemployment, maldistribution, and social neglect of various kinds.

The anarchy of the market is, of course, a direct object of welfare redress. Fiscal and monetary policy, urban renewal, unemployment compensation, social security, antipollution controls, industrial regulation and a long list of similar measures are typical welfare measures that address themselves to the repair, containment, or suppression of the anarchic ills of capitalism. If the remedies are often unsuccessful, the reason is that the anarchic malfunctions reflect the working-out of still deeper-lying core elements in the socioeconomic makeup of capitalism—above all, the direction of productive activity by privately owned aggregates of capital. This is a fundamental aspect of capitalism—indeed, its vital center—to which welfare reforms do not penetrate, or which they abridge only slightly. That is why welfarism is a development *within* capitalism and not beyond it, and it is why socialism must hesitate before it declares that it can gain its objectives within the boundaries of the welfare state.

There is also a second set of problems with which welfare institutions deal. These problems have to do with the culture of capitalism—its bourgeois "superstructure"—rather than its operational stresses and strains. Here we find such symptoms as the anomic quality of life, the much-discussed malaise and alienation of modern society, the degradations associated with commercialism, the decay of the communal spirit, etc. To alleviate or offset these ailments we find a second array of welfare measures that aim at restoring social morale, or at providing a sense of communality. The elaborate edifice of education is partly supported for this purpose. Services are provided to the sick or the aged, not only for economic but for "social" reasons. Indeed, the very presence of a government that declares its interest in the protection of the environment, in "law and order," and in the public weal, fills the need for an explicitly moral social concern to which the private sphere makes no contribution. The welfare state thus seeks to provide through the public sector a sense of communality that is absent from the attitudes normally engendered by a bourgeois culture.

To be sure, these attitudes of a bourgeois culture are themselves symptoms, not root elements. Just as the anarchic aspect of capitalism expresses deeper-lying problems, so the familiar social ailments of modern capitalism also express more fundamental attributes of the system—in particular, the profoundly individualistic ideology and morality of a system built on a universalized competitive striving for wealth. And just as the welfare state seeks to remedy the problems of the market while bypassing its core institutions, so welfare capitalism tries to undo the excesses of its culture while leaving

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untouched the acquisitive, privatized ethos that is inseparable from its economic structure.

This is not the place to discuss the limited efficacy of welfare reforms, either in the sphere of culture or economics. Rather, what I wish to emphasize is that we discover the problems of economic anarchy and social alienation (to use catchwords) in all capitalist societies, from the crudest to the most refined. Whether we investigate West Germany or Norway, England or the United States, we see economic disorders stemming from the mechanism of the market, and disaffection, erosion of social morale, and a troublesome radicalism among students, arising from the cultural milieu.

My aloof tone may suggest a scornful denigration of the efforts of the welfare state to offset these problems. Of course, once one sees the failure of welfare measures to grapple with the deepest roots of the malfunctions to which they are addressed, some critical stance is inescapable. Yet I am far from dismissing the achievements of the welfare state as hypocritical or insignificant. Indeed, it may well be that the welfare state at its most advanced—as we find it in the Scandinavian nations or in certain policies of the Netherlands or Austria, for example—is the best we can do today to achieve humanist goals without jeopardizing key political and social rights. That, too, is a question to which we will return. Here I wish only to hammer home the point that the welfare state, adequate or not, must be considered as a form of capitalism—a conclusion that impels us to ask again exactly what we mean by socialism.

III

What *do* we mean by socialism? Historical imaginations are notoriously poor. The response I shall hazard may be ludicrously wide of the mark from some future vantage point. Nonetheless one must do what one can, and my imagination yields only one answer to the question. *If socialism is to be a new socioeconomic formation—I must hammer home this premise—then it must depend for its economic direction on some form of planning, and for its culture on some form of commitment to the idea of a morally conscious collectivity.* These two elements seem to me to be the only alternatives to the anarchic character and alienated culture of welfare capitalism.

Let us begin with the economic issue. There are iron necessities that govern the economic activities of all societies. Provision must be made to satisfy needs for current consumption and to replace the worn-out capital of any period. Moreover a society facing technological change within, or environmental change without, will have to alter its patterns of inputs and outputs in order to maintain a steady state of final consumption and capital replacement. And last, a society seeking to increase its wealth must refrain from consuming, and must invest the resources and labor that have been saved.

These essential tasks require the coordination of activity, often on a vast scale. Speaking in stylized fashion, there are only three ways in which this can be done. Societies can trust to the guiding hand of tradition for the maintenance of a fixed configuration of activities; this is the "system" of tradition by which primitive societies secure their continuance. Tradition will not, however, arrange things when the environment changes, or when new technologies enter or when growth is sought (the two latter cases unlikely in a tradition-bound milieu). The coordinating mechanism then becomes "command"—the conscious direction of social energies by some individual or institution empowered to allocate effort, determine levels of consumption, etc. Finally, the integrating and directing economic task can also be performed by the market. The market is actually a form of highly decentralized command, in which each person is trained by culture and impelled by self-interest (or at the extreme, self-preservation) to "obey" the stimuli of the marketplace.

Tradition is the operative system for nondynamic cultures; and it might in the future become the operative system for socialism. It conjures up the image of a socialist economy as a congeries of kibbutzim,

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each reducing to a minimum the "cash nexus" within its boundaries, and each affiliated in the larger economy by a web of long-established exchange relationships that would involve a minimum of either market dealings or command directives. Life would then follow a steady inertial course, presumably with a minimum of self-generated or externally imposed change.

However attractive such a vision, at today's juncture of history it is futile—worse, dangerous—to imagine that tradition could solve the problems of material reproduction and adaptation. The problem of change, stemming both from the continuous pressure of science and technology and from the tightening constraints of the environment, are aspects of our era that will not disappear with the advent of socialism. Society will have to alter its structure of production continuously whether or not it seeks growth. Moreover, let us not forget that the stated purpose of socialism is to change the patterns of present-day income distribution and employment. Tradition cannot accomplish that.

Could the market system, under suitable guidance, accomplish these ends? Here the problems are two-fold. The first is whether the conventional means of guidance for a market system would be sufficient to bring about the desired or needed changes. Would taxes, subsidies, regulations, and the like effectively alter income distribution, or would individuals following their acquisitive impulses (how else would a market system work?) nullify these intentions as they have been so often frustrated in the past? Would guidance by taxes and subsidies be powerful enough to overcome the profound inertias of occupational and industrial patterns of activity, or would these too persist, finding ways around the tax or subsidy structure to achieve ends at variance with those of the planners? I raise these questions in an apparent mood of skepticism, disillusioned with respect to the "reforming" powers of the market in the face of the wholesale cheating and evasion that seem to be endemic and irrepressible in a market system.

But that is not my deepest cause for doubt. Perhaps socialism can induce or legislate a high standard of law-abiding behavior. There still remains another objection to the market as the "system" of socialism. If the market is to work, marketers must follow its dictates. Because we can assume that socialism will not permit individuals to suffer economic misery, we can assume that marketers will not follow these dictates by necessity, for survival's sake. They will follow them for gain.

Now comes the crucial question: is this motivation compatible with the collective moral commitment that is to replace the self-centeredness of bourgeois society? Socialists have always railed against the invidious striving of the market that forces individuals to subordinate their full personalities to narrow economic roles. Moreover, it is not only the motivations of capitalists that are at stake—perhaps, under socialism, managers could be trained to obey price signals simply as a guide to steering their nationalized enterprises, with no thought of personal profit. The issue is the motivation of working people. For the market mechanism is not merely a means to profit. It is also a means to individual betterment by the maximization of one's income. Without this drive, the mechanism will not work.

But is the drive for private gain compatible with the goal of socialism? I do not see how it can be. The market system, in order to function, requires attitudes of self-seeking that are in direct conflict with the goal of an "other-oriented" society. If socialism seeks to avoid both the anarchy and alienation of capitalism, it must seek to break the hold of the market, not merely over the economy but over the mind.[1]

IV

Thus the market cannot become the main order-bestowing system underlying socialism as a new order. Some limited reliance on a market mechanism may be necessary to achieve efficiency, for I doubt whether an industrial society could operate without price signals; some areas of market activity may serve as a vent for unwanted but insistent

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aspects of human behavior, much as do the controlled red-light districts of certain countries. But I do not see how the market mentality can be encouraged within socialism, *if socialism is to be distinguished from capitalism by a different kind of socioeconomic formation.* With much reluctance I am led to conclude that the market process, for all its flexibility, extreme decentralization, and self-regulation—indeed, ultimately *because* of these properties, all of which depend on market behavior—is not congenial to socialism as a new kind of social order.

If tradition cannot, and the market system should not, underpin the socialist order, we are left with some form of command as the necessary means for securing its continuance and adaptation. Indeed, that is what planning means. Command by planning need not, of course, be totalitarian. But an aspect of authoritarianism resides inextricably in all planning systems. A plan is meaningless if it is not carried out, or if it can be ignored or defied at will. Some form of penalty must assure the necessary degree of compliance. Compliance need not be total, and penalties need not be Draconian. Incentives may succeed where punishments fail. But planning will not assure a socialist society of a capacity to endure or adapt unless the planning is a system of effective *command.* From that conclusion I see no escape.

This does not mean that socialism is doomed to repeat the disasters of central planning in the Soviet Union, where things are so bad that the system teeters on the verge of its own kind of anarchy. Perhaps associations of workers, long the ideal form of socialist "ownership," can replace rigid hierarchies of managership. Perhaps democratic and participatory procedures can break up the bureaucratic inertia of planning systems.

Nevertheless an inescapable necessity must be faced. The economy must be concerted. However democratic the internal organization of society, however much the principle of workers' control, or civil-servant stewardship, are carried into practice, the factories and stores and farms and shops of a socialist socioeconomic formation must be coordinated, if socialism is not to become even more anarchic than capitalism. And this coordination must entail obedience to a central plan.[2]

V

It is clear by now that a great deal hinges on the determination that socialism be defined in terms of a distinct socioeconomic order, "beyond" that of welfare capitalism. Before we examine that question further, I want to explore one remaining aspect of the idea of such a new socioeconomic order, an aspect on which my argument has repeatedly turned, although it has not yet been placed at stage center. The issue concerns the culture that must characterize a social order deserving the name of "socialism."

Surely socialism will have its unique culture. Every major chapter of socioeconomic history—primitive life, "Asiatic despotisms," classical antiquity, medieval life, capitalism—has been identifiable by a distinct culture, recognizable not only in styles of art and philosophy and religious imagination, but in the habits and customs, folkways and moralities of daily life.

The culture of capitalism is "bourgeois." By bourgeois we mean a culture that celebrates, supports, encourages and breeds the idea of the primary importance of the *individual.* Certainly, that is the theme on which current ideology endlessly harps. If the culture of socialism is to be different, I presume that it must celebrate, support, encourage and breed the idea of the primary importance of the *collectivity.* In addition, I believe that the culture of socialism must depart from that of capitalism in a different way. Bourgeois culture is focused on the *material achievement* of the individual. Socialist culture must focus on his or her *moral or spiritual achievement.* A socialist society should be as suffused and preoccupied with the idea of moral purpose as capitalist society is suffused and preoccupied with that of personal gain.

I do not think there is much disagreement that some such collective morality is generally assumed to constitute an integral part of a

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genuine socialist order. Even the critics of socialism recognize this new moral commitment, and only doubt that it can be reached in practice. "You can't change human nature," is the standard dismissal of the vision of a society of heightened social concern.

I shall not examine that objection here. Perhaps at some very deep level it is true. Yet I see no reason to doubt that something resembling a socialist morality could be attained, however slowly and painfully and partially. Anyone who reflects on the difference between our own culture and that of the Aztec or Incan, Bedouin or Eskimo worlds, will be slow to affirm that a culture cannot be reached simply because it is so different from ours, so contrary to the way we see "human nature."

The issue I want to raise is quite different. It has to do with a problem that I believe to be as deeply embedded in a true socialist culture, *once that culture is attained*, as the necessity for a command form of economic organization is embedded in its socioeconomic structure. This cultural problem is the difficulty that a socialist culture will experience in accepting the tolerant political and perhaps social attitudes of bourgeois life.

I do not mean to exaggerate this tolerance in capitalist societies. There is a vast amount of repression in bourgeois culture. Yet one must ask oneself how it is that a magazine like *Dissent*, dedicated to the discussion—worse, the advocacy—of socialism can be permitted to exist. Why does capitalist society allow its subversive universities, presses, political movements to say and write and argue their seditious ideas? One answer, of course, is that bourgeois society is confident that the subversion of these ideas is negligible; that less harm is done to the legitimacy of the prevailing faith by ignoring than by persecuting these ideas. But that answer does not explain the relatively high threshold of psychological security (of complacency, if you will) that allows capitalist society to permit these *potentially* dangerous expressions to exist. Medieval society did not tolerate them. Classical Greek society did not. Soviet or Maoist society does not. Why, then, does bourgeouis society find itself able to accept and ignore dissent to the degree it does?

The answer has two aspects. One, which we admire and like to advance, is that a culture founded on the primacy of the individual naturally asserts the rights of individuals to speak their minds freely, to act as they wish within reasonable bounds, to behave as John Stuart Mill preached in his treatise *On Liberty*.

I do not doubt that this is an important reason for the bourgeois tolerance of dissent. But there is another reason, less noticed because it consists in the absence of something, rather than in its forceful presence. This is the lack, within bourgeois society, of a *moral significance* attaching to most political or social acts or ideas. Dissenting thought appears within bourgeois society as a mere commodity in the "marketplace" of ideas, to use the common and illuminating phrase. Alternative life styles, departures in policies, new directions for individual or national activity are considered as "options" yielding calculable costs and benefits, or as "propositions" that can be considered in a detached and pragmatic light. Of course, there is always a threshold of sensitivity. Attacks on property, on the legitimacy of government itself, on sexual or other prejudices are very difficult (although not impossible) for a bourgeois society to accept. But I must ask my readers to weigh the degree of bourgeois tolerance for revolutionary parties or "wild" ideas against their toleration in *any* nonbourgeois culture—primitive, despotic, religious, or "state capitalist."

The reason for the difference, I suggest, lies precisely in the divorce of bourgeois culture from a sense of moral commitment and concern. Dissident political and social beliefs in bourgeois society may be considered as erroneous, foolish, shocking, deplorable, or dangerous, but *they are not thought of as blasphemous*. Dissent is not intolerable because it does not breach a profound sense of what is good.

Yet, if a socialist society is to attain the culture of moral commitment to which it aspires, it must view its politics and its social

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mores as guided by a desire to be good, not merely expedient. Dissents, disagreements, and departures from norms then assume a far more threatening aspect than under bourgeois society, for they hold out the possibility of destroying the very commitment to a moral consensus by which socialist society differs from capitalist.

Nor can we wriggle off this hook by asserting that, among its moral commitments, socialism will choose to include the rights of individuals to their Millian liberties. For that celebration of individualism is directly opposed to the basic socialist commitment to a deliberately embraced collective moral goal. Perhaps we get a sense of the tensions that are likely to trouble socialist society when we reflect on the difficulty with which democratic bourgeois society copes with those ideas or activities that threaten the democratic process itself. But under socialism, every dissenting voice raises a threat similar to that raised under a democracy by those who preach antidemocracy. Because socialist society aspires to be a *good* society, all its decisions and opinions are inescapably invested with moral import. Every disagreement with them, every argument for alternative policies, every nay-saying voice therefore raises into question the moral validity of the existing government, not merely its competence in directing activities that have no particular moral significance. Dissents and disagreements thereby smack of heresy in a manner lacking from societies in which expediency and not morality rules the roost.

VI

These conclusions will distress or even outrage many readers, because they seem to be nothing but the familiar conservative or reactionary warnings that socialism is incompatible with freedom, and therefore reprehensible. But I do not intend to join this chorus of admonishing voices. Instead, let us ask what consequences follow from my argument that socialism, as a chapter of history truly beyond welfare capitalism, is likely to present structural and cultural aspects that are distasteful or unacceptable to many present-day socialists.

The first possibility is immediately evident. It is to avoid the difficulties of our position by undoing our original premise. Once we give up the insistence that socialism must be a new departure in history, we bypass many of the hard conclusions to which we have been forced. We can maintain the self-correcting, self-propelling mechanism of a market-oriented economy—a decision that vastly simplifies the organizational problem of socialism. We can retain an individualist, rather than collective, general orientation. Socialism can then be described as a *program* rather than a new social order. Its programmatic content is not hard to describe: a search for economic equity in society, for the constriction of property rights, for humanizing the work process, for democratic participation, personal cultivation, civil liberties, and the like. As I have mentioned before, I do not take such a program lightly; I repeat that it may be the best we can do to cope with certain present evils without jeopardizing the liberties we desire to defend.

Yet, we must be clear about the consequences of this choice. Socialism then becomes a movement *within* welfare capitalism, not beyond it. The retention of the market system implies as well the likelihood of problems of "anarchy": the retention of an individualistic orientation probably brings many of the problems of anomie, malaise, "alienation." The idea of radical change would therefore be relinquished in favor of incremental change—a slow and uneven advance that would keep, perhaps indefinitely, some of the most important characteristics of capitalism. Socialism then becomes an unending and perhaps ultimately futile struggle to "humanize" a society based on the inhuman imperatives and ideologies of capital.

Revolutionary socialists will reject such a defeatist position. They must then accept the price of a leap into the future. There are respectable arguments for such a position. One can press for socialism as a new chapter beyond welfare capitalism because one

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believes that ills to which socialism would address itself are greater by far than those it will create. The anarchy of capitalism is, after all, an immense evil for millions of persons in the West, hundreds of millions or even billions, if we widen our view to include the globe. The anomie, alienation and purposelessness of an individualistic way of life extend far and deep under capitalism, robbing existence of the stabilizing certainties that have guided it under all other forms of social organization. Capitalism alone exposes its constituents to the anxiety of life without the succor of a collective morality. One can argue that the repair of these damages is worth far more than the curtailment of economic freedom or the diminution of personal liberty that socialism will require. And then, too, there is the thought that those who will live under socialism will no more regret the absence of vanished privileges than we regret those of earlier ages. We do not lament the vanished rights of aristocracy. A generation accustomed to the supporting discipline of socialism will not miss those of bourgeois individualism.

There will remain some socialists who cannot accept this rationale. There remains for them a third choice. Socialism can then be viewed as a direction of historic change whose underlying tendencies are those I have described. That does not require the conclusion that every socialist society must sink to the worst levels of tyranny and oppression, any more than the presence of anarchic and alienating tendencies in capitalism requires that every such society become a grotesque version of its latent tendencies. Rather, from this perspective, socialism becomes a historical drift that can no longer be viewed uncritically as a deliverance, but must be regarded as a process that will bring unwanted changes as well as desired ones.

What is important, in trying to think about socialism, is to resist the delusion that history is so soft and indeterminate that we can have a socialist cake with bourgeois icing. A searching examination of the requirements for a truly new order forces us to recognize that deep qualitative differences must separate such a socialism from the society in which we live. The new order of socialism may display many surface variations and some vestiges of bourgeois ways, but at bottom it must differ from capitalism as capitalism, despite its variations and aristocratic remnants, differs at bottom from feudalism. This requires a much more sober estimation of socialism than is now generally to be found. Above all, it requires the bitter admission that socialism cannot be the best of all worlds, as we creatures of bourgeois society judge what is best. If we wish to bestow the name socialism on the next chapter of history, we must not expect it to be written in the vocabulary of a period that is finished. □

dissent

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Notes

[1]This is the logic behind Marx's opposition to money itself. "Greed," he writes, "as such [is] impossible without money; all other kinds of accumulation and of mania for accumulation appear as primitive, restricted by needs on the one hand and by the restricted nature of products on the other *(sacri aura fames)." Grundrisse* (London: 1973), p. 163.

[2]This general argument is given special urgency if we emphasize two historic problems that I have deliberately passed over in this essay. The first is the necessity to intervene deeply, and probably ruthlessly, into the economy in order to establish the socialist order in the first place. The second is the need to continue a policy of painful intervention to accommodate the socialist economy, once set into place, to the constricting limits of the environment. □

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Lewis Coser

"Sometimes," says the protagonist in Robert Pirsing's novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, echoing Montaigne, "it is a little better to travel than to arrive." The trouble with Robert Heilbroner's argument is that he is unwilling to consider this possibility. As in much of his previous writing, Heilbroner is so obsessed with what allegedly awaits us at the end of the road that he is rather unattentive to the benefits that may accrue to us as, hesitantly and stumblingly, we make our way on it. But it won't do to disdain the real gains in the human condition that have been made on the road from unrestricted capitalism to the welfare state.

Though he permits himself in places to say some nice things about the welfare state, the overall drift of his argument is designed to denigrate it and to characterize it as just another face of capitalist domination. He even argues that "the welfare state . . . is a kind of apotheosis of capitalism." This is about as useful as calling 17th-century absolutism a kind of apotheosis of feudalism. The social and political structure of, say, France in the 17th century, its culture and its life styles, were qualitatively different from those of the Middle Ages—even though certain key institutions of the *ancien régime* were only swept away by the French Revolution. In the same way, an advanced welfare state, in which planned policy has partly replaced the unplanned operation of the market, and in which the unseen hand of God has given way in many sectors of the polity and the economy to the visible powers of regulating agencies, may be called an "apotheosis of capitalism" only in a Pickwickian sense. All of this is not to deny the enormous weight of the corporate giants that bestride many an industry and can exert inordinate sway in the economy as a whole. It is only to assert that in the advanced welfare state other powers have been able to contain and countervail them in major sectors of public life. I hold no brief for even an advanced welfare state, indeed I wish ardently to go beyond it, but I must still insist that to see in it the zenith of capitalism, rather than an indication that it might have reached its nadir, seems rather short-sighted.

To be sure the welfare state has not abolished capitalism and the profit motive, it still contains many of the evils that marked the preceding epoch, but it is emphatically a very different animal than classical capitalism. One may, of course, always argue that it is still "basically" capitalism, but this term is analytically so vacuous that it can hardly serve as well. As a matter of fact, "basic" breaks in human history are extremely rare. Powerful analysts, such as de Tocqueville, have even argued that prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary France were "basically" more similar than dissimilar. Most transformations on the human scene proceed relatively slowly, gradually, and in an incremental manner, rather than through apocalyptic breaks. Is the New South "basically" the same as the Old South? Is the Germany of today "basically" the same as that of Bismarck? Is the role of women "basically" the same as it was in the Victorian age? Such questions really are no more enlightening than the famous dispute on whether the glass of water is half full or half empty. It all depends on your point of view.

Heilbroner's fixation on the "basic" continuity of capitalism from laissez faire to the welfare state leads him to another mistake. He fails to see that the welfare state, far from developing "naturally" out of unrestrained capitalism, came into being largely through the continued struggle of labor and union organizations. It continues to exist and develop because of the unrelenting struggle of these forces. The welfare state, even though it has proved congenial to certain sectors of managerial and capitalist interests, is largely the result of continuous pressures on the

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haves by the have-nots. It is not a novel measure of social control, as Marcuse and his friends assert, but, like the eight-hour day of an earlier time, a result of the assertion of power on behalf of the underdog. As Alistair MacIntyre (in his fine critical appraisal of *Herbert Marcuse*, Viking, New York, 1970) says so well: "The notion that the ruling elite are now able to treat welfare as an institution of social control is at very best a quarter-truth, and a very dangerous one."

I suppose that others will address themselves in some detail to this part of Heilbroner's paper, and prefer therefore to deal in greater detail with what I think is Heilbroner's most powerful argument: the contention that socialism must necessarily enforce a collectivistic morality in counterpoint to the rampant individualism of the bourgeois age.

I cannot follow him when he characterizes bourgeois culture as one "that celebrates, supports, encourages, and breeds the idea of the primary importance of the individual." Individualism, however, emerged in courtly and aristocratic circles during the Renaissance and is by no means a bourgeois invention. It later was developed largely in struggles *against* bourgeois society. More important, I had supposed that, if there was any basic agreement among socialist critics of bourgeois culture, it involved the notion that this culture rested on the enhancement of the individualism and autonomy of *some* individuals at the price of the repression of the individuality of most others. If that is not the message that is conveyed by Fourier or Proudhon, by Marx or Norman Thomas, then I have misread all of them through a lifetime of study.

THE WHOLE SOCIALIST TRADITION has centered upon the criticism of bourgeois society as stultifying, thwarting, and stunting the capacities of human beings. What else did Marx mean when he talked about the alienating conditions of bourgeois life? Most of the classical socialist tradition maintained that socialist culture would for the first time allow the full flowering of individuality. Far from advocating, as Heilbroner claims, "the primary importance of the collectivity," it argued instead that only a fundamental restructuring of the conditions of collective life would permit the full development of human autonomy.

But no matter what the initial intentions of its founders might be, Heilbroner argues, a future socialist society, being necessarily built on the primacy of command over self-direction, will have to be anti-individualistic. It cannot, he asserts, permit the kind of laissez faire attitude in the sphere of manners and morals that characterized the bourgeois age. But this laissez faire attitude is, I think, mainly a creature of Heilbroner's imagination. In the period of bourgeois ascendancy, in the period of primitive accumulation, bourgeois culture was built on severe repression, even among its leading strata. The world of the Protestant Ethic and of Mr. Gradgrind was hardly a world of hedonistic pleasures, sensory indulgences, or assertion of unfettered human autonomy. Only the self-denying ordinances of Protestant and utilitarian culture allowed the accumulation of the capital needed for the emergence of capitalism triumphant. At later stages of bourgeois development such restrictions came to be progressively removed. And under late capitalism, and in the age of the welfare state, hedonistic enjoyment (to the sorrow of Daniel Bell) came to be a valid option in an increasingly pluralistic moral universe.

But if that be the case, why must we assume that under socialism such pluralistic options will no longer be available? I suppose that we are all agreed that a socialism of scarcity is a contradiction in terms. Given a relative abundance of resources, there will be no need of excessive restraint. Heilbroner argues that a socialist society must enforce common uniform standards because it wishes "to be good, not merely expedient." But this is not, as they say, necessarily so. Richard Tawney answered Heilbroner over half a century ago when he wrote:

> It is obvious, indeed, that no change of system or machinery can avert the causes of social *malaise* which consist in the egotism, greed, or quarrelsomeness of human nature. What it can do is to

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create an environment in which these are not the qualities which are encouraged. It cannot secure that men live up to their principles. What it can do is to establish their social order upon principles to which, if they please, they can live up and not down. It cannot control their actions. It can offer them an end upon which to fix their minds.

It is not true, as Heilbroner says, "that celebration of individualism is directly opposed to the basic socialist commitment to a deliberately embraced *collective* moral goal." The society of which Tawney dreamed, and of which I dream, does not force people to be good, it simply removes some of the impediments that previously did not permit them to be good. It provides incentives for autonomous individuals, no longer driven by the compulsions of an acquisitive society, to choose paths of self-realization that do not conflict with the collective well-being. Solidarity and fraternity do not contradict the need for self-realization; they make it possible.

One last word: Heilbroner subscribes to the kind of "historicism" against which Karl Popper has directed his shafts for many years. He somehow assumes that a reified "history" drives people inevitably into some predetermined future. Against any such deterministic scheme one needs to insist that the future can never be predetermined since men and women in the here and now make it happen. If the future is, in fact, open (although partly bound by structural conditions and trends), then it behooves us to reject messages of despair such as those of Heilbroner since they might well turn into self-fulfilling predictions if they attract a wide hearing. The myth of inevitable progress served to emasculate transformative capacities by seemingly making voluntary activity supererogatory. The myth of the inevitable tyranny of the collective could serve to emasculate the prepotent desire of human beings to reach a society in which the free development of each is based on the free development of all. □

Bogdan Denitch

Robert Heilbroner raises a cardinal question: can *socialism* be democratic? Clearly, it is not a question of whether socialists are democrats, nor whether the various reforms of capitalism that socialists propose here and now are consistent with democracy. Heilbroner poses the more serious question: in a socialist society, the one presumably beyond the welfare state, the one in which socialists are no longer just adding one more reform to a pyramid of welfare-state reforms—in short, in a society in which the basic means of production, distribution, and exchange are socially owned, and no capitalist class is left as a class, can democratic institutions, as we understand them, continue to exist?

Part of the problem lies in the relatively mechanical definition of what a socialist society would have to look like. There is a commonly held definition, espoused not only by such economists as Paul Sweezy who have no problem with the question, since their response is that socialism shall not be democratic, but also held by most of the Fabians and the more moderate social democrats who all had the notion that centralized planning was a feature that is indispensable to socialism, and that centralized planning would inevitably involve an enormous concentration of political and economic power in the hands of those who plan. In socialist critiques of the Soviet dictatorship, the formulation often used was: in a society where the state owns all the means of production, distribution, and exchange,

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the sole relevant question is who "owns" the state. Socialist critics of the Soviet Union concluded that, since the political bureaucracy had a monopoly on the relevant decisions, it "owned" the state, and that the state therefore represented the interests of this class (stratum, group, or whatever) rather than those of the working class and the population as a whole.

In a socialist society where the monopoly of power would presumably not be as highly concentrated in a layer of top planners and bureaucrats and where parliamentary institutions and normal civil liberties would continue, this criticism would still maintain some force. It is, after all, a truism in modern political democracies that less and less power is wielded by the legislatures, and more and more is transferred to bureaucracies. Granted, these can be selfless, well-wishing bureaucracies; but the notion is that modern society requires a level of expertise that can be mobilized at decisive points and that, for practical purposes, makes the experts the rulers. This would be all the more so if the economy as a whole were in the hands of the same government experts who control the political mechanisms.

Heilbroner's second point—that a socialist bureaucracy would be more actively involved in governing because it is concerned with doing good and therefore more impatient with obstacles, disagreements, and inefficiency—all characteristic of the democratic process—is a separate and extremely interesting point, though I do not choose to pursue it at this time. If one grants the first assumption of bureaucratic planning at the center, in a society fundamentally unchanged from the present one in terms of values and distribution of power, the second point does follow. But there is more than one tradition of socialism, and it is important to stress this diversity of socialist traditions. Whether one calls it socialism from above or socialism from below, refers back to the debates between Shaw and Wells among the British Fabians, or stresses the centralist versus the syndicalist strands of the socialist tradition in Europe, it is clear that on this question of centralized planning and control there is ambivalence. Heilbroner stresses only one tradition. It has an honorable pedigree, but nevertheless it has, in my opinion, little to do with what a modern, highly industrialized socialist society would or should look like. The socialism of centralized planning is, in one way or another, a socialism of scarcity.

THERE IS another approach that could be called self-governing or self-managing socialism. It has an increasingly wide acceptance both among West European Socialists and East European dissident democratic Communists. The second have had direct and painful experience with the problem of centralization while the first are in part reacting to the dull welfare states established in Europe in the post-World War II period. Here the tradition is more syndicalist than centralist. It is based on a set of assumptions that have been submitted to prolonged testing in Yugoslavia, though under far from optimal conditions.

Whatever one thinks of Yugoslavia—and it is a one-party state—the economy has shown a great deal of autonomy from the center and, more to the point, numbers of previously uninvolved individuals have become successfully involved in running complex enterprises and institutions. The result is a more efficient and effective system than any centralized economy in Eastern Europe. While the Yugoslav experience does not tell us much about the political system appropriate to a democratic socialist society, it does posit an economy run essentially by elected bodies of workers and other employees. These elected bodies have had ever widening powers. They have acted—and this is crucial—not merely as institutions managing sectors of the economy, but as organs of political socialization creating a new nexus of values and links in an industrialized society.

Two issues are involved. One is: can elected workers' councils run an economy without prohibitive costs in terms of efficiency? The answer seems clearly to be, yes. To be sure, there are problems. Sometimes wrong decisions are made, but apparently not more

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often than in centrally planned economies. What is remarkable is not that there are problems, but how sustained the rate of growth produced by such an economy was in the decade before the general European slump of the 1970s. During that decade Yugoslav growth figures approximated those of Japan. It is that, after all, which made the Yugoslav economic model so attractive to the liberalizing reformers of Eastern Europe. The second issue, however, is more interesting for the prospect of a democratic socialism, and this is the nature of institutions developing within such an economy. The economic enterprise also becomes a socio-political community. It is the place from which political and economic power is aggregated in the system as a whole. It is the place through which the newly industrialized peasants learn the rules of the game of an industrial society. It is the place through which the notion of individual and collective rights is taught and asserted. And it is a community in which a set of values consistent with the new socialist civilization will have to develop, if there is to be such a civilization.

Here the problems are even more troublesome, for this means a society in which there is considerable pressure to participate and take responsibility. It means a society in which, since the work enterprise is one in which you expect to spend a good part of your life, one does not push differences to the knife. The mechanism, the style, is communitarian and consensual rather than conflictual. The pressures are toward egalitarian leveling, since in enterprise work councils the more skilled cadres are forced to argue *why* they should be paid more than other employees—sometimes a painful experience for surgeons talking to nurses and other workers in a hospital but one that I would argue has a good bit to do with socialist democracy.

There are two key elements that seem indispensable to a working decentralized self-managing economy. Again looking at the Yugoslav experience, it seems clear that without these, the workers' councils become a sham, as they indeed have become in Poland and Hungary. The first is that the councils must have genuine economic power and must take responsibility for decisions they make, including bad ones. This had dictated the development of a socialist *market* economy for a very simple reason. Something, some institution or mechanism that at least appears reasonably impartial had to be developed to replace the bureaucratic planning center. The mechanism that seemed most adaptable was a limited market. Socialist theorists, with such rare exceptions as Oscar Lange and some of the more recent Yugoslav and Polish theorists, have had a dogmatic, almost puritanical attitude toward the market. Presumably, harking back to the young Marx, the market reifies commodities and work and encourages the development of some kind of consumer sovereignty that socialist intellectuals all too often think is bad for ordinary mortals.

There are two sides to this aversion. One is a predilection of socialist intellectuals toward neat, organized plans run by experts not too unlike themselves; the other is a notion that if consumers of the lower orders are turned loose, they will not choose things that are good for them. Both are elitist conceptions and have only survived in the socialist movement for so long because of the association of the market with private ownership and great concentrations of wealth and power. But there is no reason why a modified market cannot be used, on the one hand, as a yardstick to measure the performance of enterprises and, on the other, as a determinant of the consumer goods that the public wants. I have never found it a moral question that teenagers in Yugoslavia, or in Poland, yearn for Levis. Apparently centralized planners do. There seems to be a moral feeling that centrally designed, badly fitting pants are more appropriate for socialists than Levis. There, I suspect, the authoritarian bureaucrats of Eastern Europe probably have a good deal in common with the tradition in the Western socialist movement that parts of the British Labour party represented. I sometimes believe that Sir Stafford Cripps *preferred* to have rationing. A market economy in a socialist society may well lead to

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some hedonistic waste and frivolities for the plebeians; I believe it to be a good thing.

A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM with a socialist market economy, at least in Yugoslavia—I am still using it as a model—is that various institutions other than plants are also run by workers' councils operating in a market setting. This has posed painful debates in the field of culture and in some service delivery institutions. Do the local cultural funds go to build more football fields or chamber-music orchestras? It is surprising how readily socialist intellectuals spring to elitist solutions. The truth is that within that particular market economy, workers' councils dominated by blue-collar workers have proven more generous in subsidizing "high culture" than have their betters, either in state-run "socialism" or under capitalism. This is not to say that they have not made mistakes. It is simply to say that it does not follow that if blue-collar workers are given power over social and cultural expenditures, which presumably is what we mean by saying "to extend democracy into the economy and society," that an era of barbarism would follow. The Yugoslav metal industry, with two-thirds of the councils composed of blue-collar workers, has generously subsidized chamber music, avant-garde theater, operas and the like—in fact, somewhat more generously than the previous centralized system had done. The painful process involved was that various intellectuals were forced to go before the councils and argue their case for funding, an indignity they object to far less when it has to be done before a local equivalent of the Ford and Carnegie foundations.

This dwelling on what seems an almost peripheral issue of the democratic financing of culture in a democratically managed socialist economy is to lead up to my central point. Democratic socialists have had, all too often, far too mean and narrow an image of what a socialist democracy could look like. It is in response to this mean and narrow image that Heilbroner's polemic makes some sense. A socialist culture would, in my opinion, have to center on the process of production, the term being taken in its widest meaning. There is no reason to assume that history came to a stop with the development of liberal political institutions of the Anglo-Saxon peoples; that the end of history and the sole model of democracy is the multiparty polity based on geographical representation. After all, a good case can be made for functional representation in geographically mobile societies, and whatever else the virtues of multiparty representation have been so far, they have been remarkably successful in keeping the lower strata from participation in governance other than in occasional elections. A democracy that will result in government by lawyers, or at best professional trade-union functionaries, seems to me a somewhat narrow definition of that term. And while Yugoslavia is clearly not the image of a democratic socialist society, at least it challenges our imagination in regard to ways that popular participation can be built into an economy and to the various possible social and cultural institutions. Without this participation, I believe that most of the talk about democracy in an industrial society of the modern type is a sham.

Nothing in the argument so far should be taken even as a hint that the classic civil liberties won in bourgeois societies (not "bourgeois" democracy but democracy won from the bourgeoisie) would not need to be maintained in a socialist society. What I am addressing myself to, rather, is the more troublesome question of how to create autonomous pockets of power in a society where the economy is socially controlled. The more serious critics of socialism have always picked on this feature of a socialist society as the one that facilitates the development of authoritarianism. Under capitalism, presumably, independent centers of power exist in the economy that can control what happens in the civil society or at least set limits to it. Therefore, it is necessary in thinking about a post-welfare socialism to think of how, in such a society, centers of autonomous, legitimate, and institutionalized

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power could be created. This is far more important than the question of whether or not political parties, which would also exist, would be able to offer alternate platforms every once in a while. What institutions would have the capacity, politically and economically, to say no? This in turn means that there would be a continual tension in a socialist society between two goods—the autonomous, self-governing institutions and the need to coordinate these institutions for greater public good. Within this tension, continual debate and dialogue would continue.

My last point is that the underpinning of a self-governing economy requires a working population with capacities to utilize such an institutional framework. This problem has been grossly exaggerated by some critics because of a tendency to place too much emphasis on expertise and formalized training. The modern industrial working class is far better educated than was its 19th-century predecessor, and it is no longer willing to concede legitimate authority in the economy based on a supposed monopoly of expertise held by the owners and managers. This is so whether one thinks of the working class as limited to blue-collar workers or takes the term in its wider meaning to include the technical and white-collar strata who are often, if anything, better educated than their supervisors.

The rising educational level of the working population may not argue for the establishment of self-managing institutions in the economy, but it certainly does challenge the maintenance of rigidly hierarchical models that are prevalent under capitalism and state "socialism." Just as there has been a rising involvement of sectors of the middle class in local government, urban decentralization, and school management, it would seem that an analogous development is occurring in large-scale institutions and industries in Western Europe. Unions and workers increasingly show an impatience with the assumption that decisions affecting their lives cannot be made democratically within the workplace. I believe ultimately, therefore, that it is in this direction that the real answer to Heilbroner's argument lies. Can socialism be democratic? Yes; otherwise, of course, it will not be worth its name or worth supporting. But more to the point, yes—provided socialists do not permit their imaginations to be crippled by the limits of liberal democracy under capitalism. □

Michael Harrington

I think it may be possible to have a "socialist cake with bourgeois icing." But I must immediately add that posing the issue that way obscures some of its essentials.

In saying this I do not dismiss Robert Heilbroner's argument out of hand, for he touches on a real problem. My objection is that Heilbroner has somewhat simplified and mislabeled a complex trend in a way that, ironically, might contribute to the worst of his fears. There are, I think, two polar extremes that will define the social space in which the postcapitalist future will develop (is developing): authoritarian, bureaucratic collectivism, and democratic, communitarian collectivism. Heilbroner is quite right to warn us against that first possibility, but by giving it the name of its polar opposite—by calling it "socialism"—he unwittingly makes it all the more difficult to fight against it.

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Bourgeois society, Heilbroner argues, gives primacy to the individual as part of its economic focus on personal gain. It tolerates dissent, and even revolutionary criticism, because it is, in some considerable measure, indifferent to ideals, even its own. Socialist society, on the other hand, will require "command" planning and, precisely because of its passionate moral commitment to the common good, is likely not to tolerate dissidence in the way its amoral, pragmatic, and cynical predecessor did.

To my mind, Heilbroner vastly overstates the tolerance that capitalist society *voluntarily* grants to its opponents. But it would be unfair to pursue such details, because he has obviously compressed his analysis into a small compass and would, I suspect, agree with most of my historical amendments to it. Even more to the point, I want to concentrate on the basic differences between us. They have to do with the relationship between political and economic power in bourgeois, socialist, and bureaucratic collectivist societies.

Capitalism is the first social-economic formation in which political and economic power are separated and the surplus is pumped out of the direct producers by economic, rather than political, means. This is an exceedingly complex reality, and I will here ignore aspects of it that would be important in a rounded analysis. I propose to focus narrowly on one strand of this phenomenon that is most relevant to Heilbroner's case.

I think that Heilbroner fails to analyze both the function and the (related) limitations of personal freedom within capitalism. It is not the "icing" of that system but a structural constituent of it. On the one hand, Heilbroner does not give capitalism sufficient credit because he does not see how central democracy was to its development; on the other hand, he does not recognize the profound limits of *bourgeois* democracy, limits that derive precisely from its functional necessity. And this failure to grasp the historic and systemic particularity of capitalist democracy keeps him from seeing the possibilities of socialist democracy.

It is the genius of capitalism that it presents its grimmest necessities as freedoms. The worker is not forced to pay a tribute established by tradition and exacted by the sword. He or she freely contracts to work or freely decides to starve. The role played by the various despots of precapitalism is taken over by the impersonal laws of the market, which impartially apply to the rich and the poor. And bourgeois democracy—political equality structurally limited, and sometimes vitiated, by economic inequality—is not only ideally suited to a system in which economic power is juridically private. It also reinforces the individualistic illusions that facilitate the growth of the most productive social system humanity has ever known. Capitalism needs democracy—but democracy of a certain, antidemocratic type.

Indeed, the politicalization of economic power in late capitalism is, as Jurgen Habermas has brilliantly analyzed, one of the sources of a crisis of legitimacy in the system. As the invisible hand is replaced by the visible—groups, regions, and even nations begin to demand that the results be fair. The problem is, of course, that even though non-, and sometimes anti-, capitalist means are being used to preserve capitalism, the essential foundations of bourgeois power have not been disturbed. This is why the welfare state normally follows corporate priorities.

WHAT IS the socialist response to this situation? The socialist essential, it must always be remembered, is not the plan; it is the democratic power of the people over the plan and the planners. The very core of capitalist power is the domination of a tiny minority over the basic investment decisions that shape the future of society behind the backs of the people and perpetuates the maldistribution of wealth at the same time. When that structure is transformed, the "icing" of bourgeois democracy is not placed on top of the socialist cake. Rather, the possibility of democracy *tout court* is established for the first time.

Fine words. But isn't Heilbroner right that planners' decisions could lead in the direction of authoritarianism? Of course he is. My

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objection is not that he identifies that very real possibility—but that he tends to treat it as the *only* possibility. This narrow focus becomes quite apparent in the choice of a critical word: "some form of command" is necessary to the socialist order. The term "command" predetermines the judgment that will be made by anyone who uses it. What must be done—in theory and in practice—is to counterpose democratic planning to command planning. Obviously, that counterposition is easier said than done. But it is a possibility, and one that Heilbroner ignores.

All possible forms of postcapitalism will see the reintegration of the political and the economic, a trend that is already in furious motion in every country in the world. But there is a wide variety of political structures and—this is the great lesson that Stalinism should have taught us—they will determine who holds economic and social power. If I can use a distinction that I find misleading and dangerous in most other contexts, in the consciously directed societies of the future it is guaranteed that the "superstructure" will control the "base." The critical question is, whose "superstructure"?

One example: as society continues to develop its planning mechanisms, will there be formal, legal provisions and subsidies for counterplanners and counterplans? If not, the dictatorship of some or another bureaucracy on the basis of monopolizing the means of decision-making is likely; if so, there is the possibility of new forms of genuine democracy, which would be as central to a socialist system as skewed democracy is to the bourgeois system.

So I would not reject Heilbroner's argument. I would amend it. Specifically, I would rewrite the last sentence in his next-to-last paragraph in this way:

> From this perspective, collectivism becomes a historical drift that can no longer be viewed uncritically as a deliverance, but must be regarded as a process that will bring unwanted changes as well as desired ones. Socialism is the movement for the democratization of that collectivist trend which points in the direction of, and struggles for, the desirable changes. □

Michael Walzer

Robert Heilbroner's argument about "moral culture" can be summed up in this way: capitalist laissez-faire makes for toleration and liberty, if only because it leaves us utterly indifferent to each other's opinions, while socialist solidarity would give us new reasons to worry about dissent and incline us toward repressive policies. It is a serious argument, and I don't think it is wholly wrong. But one might tell the same story in a rather different fashion.

When men and women are cut loose from every kind of communal support, conceived as rational egotists, encouraged to think only of themselves, they are in a certain sense, not an unimportant sense, set free. But they are not set free in ways that encourage political activity. They have more room in their private lives, but their lives are overwhelmingly private. They live in the narrow circle of family and business. They have friends, but not comrades. And, partly for these reasons, they are radically exposed to the pressures of the market. To some extent, these are pressures to conform, and surely the ability of the market to shape the tastes and opinions of masses of people ought to be disturbing to anyone who loves liberty. "They like in

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crowds," John Stuart Mill wrote, not of socialist but of bourgeois society.

But market pressures work also to exploit and trivialize, rather than eradicate, our personal, religious, and political differences. Heilbroner makes this point in explaining the range of contemporary tolerance, but it is relevant also to the issues of depth and seriousness. I am indeed free, let's say, to celebrate a black mass in my living room; and if I am unlikely to escape television coverage, my neighbors will complain only about the cameramen on their lawns; they won't say a word about my "religious preferences." But what is the point of a black mass that everyone finds *interesting*? A similar argument holds with regard to secular and political forms of dissent. Dissent is parasitic on belief, and a society that privatizes and trivializes belief takes much of the meaning out of dissent. And then toleration is too easy.

I have no doubt at all as to the value of religious freedom; nor of political freedom. But I'm not sure that either can be sustained for long without the experience of conviction, solidarity, and struggle. Within bourgeois society, this experience has been provided, above all, by the effort to create a more just and egalitarian social order. Conceived ideally, however, the private lives of individuals-as-egotists do not generate enterprises of this sort and therefore do not test the seriousness of toleration. Private men and women are shaped instead by those patterns of inequality and passivity central to capitalist organization, into consumers and spectators, perpetually excited, sometimes satiated, often frustrated, but fundamentally dependent and acquiescent. Meaningful freedom depends, by contrast, on the existence of an active public life. Here again, I am following Mill: "the spirit of a commercial people," he wrote, "will be essentially mean and slavish wherever public spirit is not cultivated by an extensive participation of the people in the business of government in detail. . . ."

Now, extensive participation of that kind is, I think, the core of socialism. The moral culture of socialism is rooted in a shared citizenship, the fellowship of the forum. We seek a remedy for passivity and privatization in a radical democracy, opening new opportunities for collective decision-making, so that the beliefs of ordinary citizens become important. Men and women acquire dignity and strength by taking a stand among their peers. But taking a stand can also be dangerous: it invites disagreement and conflict, and it can in certain circumstances breed political fierceness and intolerance. If politics is serious, it cannot be entirely without risk.

But Heilbroner is wrong to suggest that socialist democracy requires everyone to take the same stand or that it involves the triumph of a single idea of the good. It involves something very different: the creation of a new forum in which ideas about the good can be disputed. Or better, a series of forums: since we are not primitivists and don't intend a return to undifferentiated social structures or preindustrial economies, socialist politics is entirely compatible with pluralism. And if arguments go on within different and overlapping organizations, there must also be, and there will be, negotiation and compromise. Value attaches to the arguments themselves, not to particular outcomes. Some disagreements will be expressed in moral language, others in the language of expediency. It's not likely that a proposal, say, to reorganize the steel industry, though it may well be called erroneous, foolish, dangerous, and so on, will be denounced as blasphemous. Indeed, I don't see any reason to think that the formal structure of disagreement will be so different from what it is in bourgeois democracies. It is the participants who will be different.

BUT PERHAPS I have not confronted the strongest feature of Heilbroner's argument. I am assuming that the deep morality of a socialist society will be self-respect and mutual respect, and that these will provide a better basis for freedom than can possibly be provided by mere egotism and indifference. But this may be true only for political freedom. The fellowship of the forum may encompass only those committed to the forum. One can imagine socialist democracy generating a kind of political highminded-

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ness, intolerant of people without strong opinions and public interests. Perhaps this is what Heilbroner means when he speaks of "the primary importance of the collectivity." Socialist citizens would expect one another to think about and to work for the common interest. It would be more offensive in socialist society than it is in bourgeois society to evade jury duty, cheat on your taxes, stay home from critical meetings. Certain forms of withdrawal might be harder to manage, private interests harder to defend. Every solidarity, I suppose, produces a new set of strangers. But I am not inclined to view this problem in the ultimate terms that Heilbroner sets. As bourgeois society has adjusted to a certain level of commitment among its citizens, so socialist society could adjust to a certain level of apathy. Of course, we will have to make sure that it does adjust and find ways to accommodate individual waywardness. In socialist, as in capitalist society, vigilance will continue to be the price of liberty.

If we fail to produce an extensive participation of ordinary people in the business of government, then Heilbroner's collectivism would be very dangerous. A statist regime, controlling economic as well as political life, authoritarian in character, might well find it convenient to stir up among its citizens (or subjects) a new sense of moral purpose. It might encourage them to ask, for example, "not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." It might use the language of socialist solidarity ideologically, to mask an actual impoverishment of public life. And that impoverishment, together with the coercive power of such a state, would certainly reduce the range of personal and political liberty. But this would not represent the triumph of socialism, but only one more defeat. □

Robert L. Heilbroner: A Reply

I think that Lewis Coser is out of sympathy with my purpose and therefore misconstrues my argument. My purpose is to examine the idea of socialism *as a new socioeconomic formation*. These italicized words do not seem to get through. Mr. Coser avoids the problems they pose, or insists that there is no such problem. Well, I must humbly repeat my conviction that welfare capitalism *is* capitalism, however much nicer than nonwelfare capitalism, and that socialism presumably means something "basically" different. I have spelled out the basic difference, which can be compressed into *planning* and *morality*. Coser's comment boils down to an insistence that we can have socialism with the same political and ideological constraints as in the best of capitalism. I do not think that history will be so obliging. Perhaps this is what makes me guilty of "historicism" in his eyes.

I must add a word of sharp disagreement about the meaning and origins of "individualism." By individualism I think we generally mean a conception of the relation between the person and society that puts the person first, society second. J. S. Mill's *On Liberty* is the most famous exposition of this view. We also imply, I think, a strong emphasis on the equality of persons: equality before the law, equality in voting, equality in economic life as "equal" parties in exchange. Of course these views are often cruelly betrayed in bourgeois society, but that does not detract from their bourgeois origin or their bourgeois identity. Show me the John Stuart Mill of Greece or Rome, of feudal life or the aristocratic

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courts, or of socialism in any of its realizations to date, and I will cede the point.

Messrs. Walzer, Harrington, and Denitch *do* see what I am driving at, for which I am grateful. In one way or another they all think I overstate my case, and perhaps they are right. It is arguable that socialism as a new socioeconomic order would present a spectrum of variations, just as capitalism does and feudalism or the slave orders did, and perhaps some of these socialist societies of the future will tolerate the particular social relations that we celebrate. These relations remain, however, bourgeois in concept, however much they may use the "socialist" vocabulary of equality and democracy. For are not equality and democracy, as we define these terms, quintessentially bourgeois conceptions, as I have just argued against Coser? We can *hope* they will be compatible with socialism, as they are (in part) with highly developed welfare capitalism, but we cannot deny their bourgeois identity—to repeat, *as we define them.*

Bogdan Denitch's comment interests me because he goes the furthest in specifying the nature of an institutional structure that is not capitalist and that might admit the kinds of freedoms that we bourgeois-thinking self-styled socialists would like to see preserved. I have always felt it was a great pity that associationist socialism had to have its first trial in a country so burdened with history as Yugoslavia. I would agree with Denitch that this is a road many of us would like to see socialism follow, although whether that will be a historical possibility is difficult to say. □

BOOKS *(continued from page 288)*

comparatively good record on human rights issues is incontestable. But this may be explained not by the legal and social patterns both books describe but by the impact of our Judeo-Christian heritage, notably the widespread belief in God-given rights to which it has given rise, and its religious conceptions of the unassailable human soul.

Even if the practice of rights forms a secular pattern in democratic states, it is still not certain that the treatment of rights differs significantly from that of other well-established social policies, e.g., the graduated income tax. Majority rule, it can be argued, requires procedures that entail discussion, a respect for minorities, and a weighing of individual and social needs quite similar to the procedures necessary for any operational defense of rights. Whether approached as a prima facie good in terms of Flathman's liberal principle, or simply argued for as wise social policy, the stringent protection of rights depends critically upon the way in which conflicts about rights are resolved and upon the manner in which enforcement mechanisms are brought into play. Most majority-rule systems, with or without a practice of rights, will probably respect civil liberties ("the great rights") because of the necessary requirements of a rational social contract.

Neither of these books, indeed, successfully drives from the field those who seek to establish a good society solely on the basis of people's unfettered wills, and not on some external and "objectively" right standard. Those positivists and utilitarians who believe the question of human rights, as all political questions, involves claims in competition with other claims, to be resolved by agreement, still have what appears to be the strongest arguments. If rights are more inviolable than other prerogatives, privileges, or freedoms, that is only because in some communities people have agreed to treat them that way, perhaps only for the moment, and as a matter of social policy, not necessarily as a fundamental moral tenet. Consequently, rights are not sacrosanct. They do not fall outside the scope of legitimate social agreement and hence of restraints. No certainty about their fate in democracies can be vouchsafed, for we have nothing to depend on besides fallible human judgment. This should make us modest, but not necessarily afraid—for rights or for any other aspect of human welfare. □

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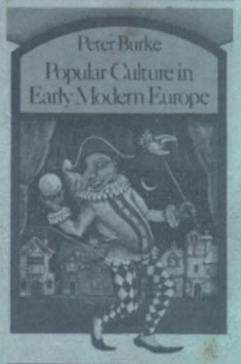

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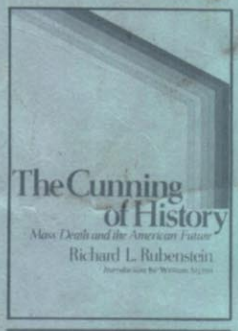

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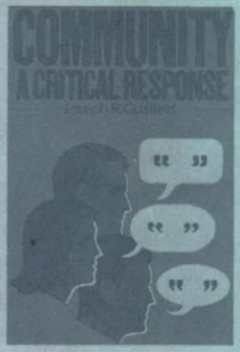

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